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FROM

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**COLLECTION
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VOL. 1234.

THROWN TOGETHER BY FL. MONTGOMERY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

By the same Author,

MISUNDERSTOOD 1 vol.

THROWN TOGETHER

A STORY

BY

FLORENCE MONTGOMERY,

AUTHOR OF "MISUNDERSTOOD."

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I N T W O V O L U M E S.

VOL. I.

L E I P Z I G

B E R N H A R D T A U C H N I T Z

1872.

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PREFACE.

THE following Story, like its predecessor "M
understood," is not intended for children. Eve
less so, since in the course of the narrative, th
Author is obliged, now and then, to side, as i
were, with the children against the parents.

The Story, though not devoid of "grown-up"
characters, is mainly founded on the lives of
children; and so appeals only to those who are
interested in the subject.

May 1872.

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THROWN TOGETH

CHAPTER I.

The Heroine's Home.

FIVE o'clock on a July afternoon
school-room, and the depressing sound
of C.

Would not such a combination in
frivolous rejoice that their education
pleted?

Cecily Middleton, aged seven, is to
down the piano, with hot heavy finger
wrist and arm a tremendous jerk even
her thumb's turn to go under; for a
manoeuvre she is every time pulled
governess at her side, and compelled
the bottom of the piano, and begin the

Nina Middleton, some years her senior,
at the table, limp and listless, by way

rule-of-three sum. With her hair all pushed back from her hot face, and her chin resting on her hands, she is determining in her own mind that it is far too hot for any sum to come right; and she feels profoundly indifferent as to workmen and the rate of their wages, which is the problem she has been given to consider. What *can* it matter? Whether the answer will be in money or in workmen she feels incapable of hazarding an opinion, and it seems to her so very unimportant.

"Nina, vous ne faites rien."

Thus suddenly rebuked, Nina roused herself, and proceeded with a long-drawn sigh to multiply the first and second terms together, and to divide by the third, producing thereby a hideous confusion. Seeing her mistake, she, with another sigh of weariness and boredom, rubbed out what she had done, and began again; but the melancholy intonation of the scale of C, combined with the state of the atmosphere, seemed to render calculation impossible, and she found herself reducing pence to shillings, and allowing for forty-eight farthings in a pound. Growing desperate at last, with heat and incapacity,

she rubbed out the whole sum—question and all; and then, in despair at what she had done, she drew her pencil down the slate with a terrific squeak, which brought upon her the wrath of Mademoiselle, and elicited shrieks of delight and amusement from Cecily.

Of course anything that created a momentary diversion from the scale of C was hailed as a relief by Cecily; and it took Mademoiselle some minutes first to reprove Nina, and then to rise and reset the sum.

But this was no solitary instance of Cecily's power of deriving amusement from the trifling events of every-day life. The squeak of a pencil was quite sufficient, in lesson-time, to evoke her mirth; and any of the hundred little accidents to which we are all more or less exposed in our daily path could send her into fits of laughter at any moment. If Mademoiselle knocked her funny-bone, or caught her gown in the fender, upset a cup of tea into her lap, or stumbled over a stool, Cecily was off, and there was no stopping her.

She enjoyed the few minutes of leisure at the

piano to the full; and, after having recovered from the laughter produced by the squeak, she proceeded to swing her legs backwards and forwards to cool herself. In so doing, she made the startling discovery that by kicking the piano above the pedal, a vibration could be produced, and was immensely delighted. But, on attempting to bring the discovery to greater perfection by a somewhat more violent kick, Mademoiselle remonstrated from the table, and put an end at once to any further experiments. An attempt at "hot-cross buns" with one finger met with a similar reception, and she was reduced to twisting round and round on the music-stool, till Mademoiselle once more returned to her side.

But opportunities for amusement were not quite over yet; for, as Mademoiselle reseated herself, she contrived to knock her finger against the notes, and raised that wounded member to her mouth with an exclamation of pain. Peal upon peal from Cecily—truly delighted was she! She rolled about on her seat till she nearly fell off the music-stool; and Mademoiselle, in an injured and somewhat huffy

THE HEROINE'S HOME.

tone, desired her to resume her practice; laughter and amusement were lost in the of the scale of C.

Meanwhile Nina worked away at her finished it; put away her slate, and went open window, where she arrived just in time a hansom drive up to the door, and her father out of it.

This was rather an unusual event, and puzzled to account for it. It was very seldom he came home at this hour. He generally straight to the park from his club, and something particular must have brought him which opinion was confirmed by hearing him call out to the footman at the door, in a tone of wonted excitement, "Has Mrs. Middleton come from her drive?"

Nina felt very curious to know what had brought him in such a hurry, and was just about to look out of the window, in order to make a further mistress of what was going on before Cecily's music-lesson came to an end; but the maid, having betaken herself to her task,

prepare for tea, the emancipated captive came running to the window, exclaiming eagerly, "Didn't I hear a hansom drive up?"

Nina instantly drew in her head, and came away from the window. Cecily's childish excitement over the hansom made her feel ashamed of her curiosity about it, and she answered, in an uninterested tone of voice, "Yes, it was papa."

Nina was a good deal older than her sister by years, and many years older by disposition and temperament, for Cecily was childish and backward for her age. Moreover, Nina was a very proud child, and made the most of the years between them. Cecily was always so over-excited, and overinterested in everything, that Nina often felt lowered in her own estimation by being interested in the things at all.

"Papa!" exclaimed Cecily; "oh! perhaps he's come to take us out in the park. What fun! what fun!"

And, in spite of the state of the thermometer, Cecily capered about, and clapped her hands with delight.

These transports were childish, not demean herself by joining in t marked carelessly that she didn't he might only have come to get a chief, or perhaps to fetch his cards.

Presently Cecily said, "Here c the carriage, and papa is standin step, waiting to speak to her."

Nina's curiosity overcame her i jumped up and joined her sister at

The carriage drove up to the Middleton advanced eagerly, and t him say, "Lydia, it is all settled room and read Magdalén's letter."

"Oh, Nina, *did you hear?*" e "it was about Aunt Magdalén agai secret about her, I am sure. This third time papa and mamma have to-day. What can it be?"

Nina answered indifferently i know; but the expression in her uninterested as she would have he For her Aunt Magdalén, and hei

boy, Mervyn Lyndsay, were objects of deep interest to her; and she was inwardly quite as anxious as Cecily to discover what the news could be that seemed to have reference to them. She leaned out of the window still further, to see what was going on below; but there was little more to be seen. Colonel and Mrs. Middleton entered the house, the footman took books and parcels out of the carriage, the coachman drove round to the stables, and the two little girls were left wondering, each in her different way, what it could all mean.

Leaving them in their perplexity, let us descend to the hall-door; and, going back a few minutes, let us stand with Colonel Middleton on the door-step, while the carriage drives up to the door.

"Lydia, it is all settled! Come into my room and read Magdalen's letter." So saying Colonel Middleton led the way to the smoking-room, and shut the door. "I am so glad, I can't *tell* you," he said, as he handed his wife the letter, and watched her while she read it. "Magdalen deserves to be happy, if anyone does; and after all, in spite of her many years of widowhood, she is still quite a girl.

This was spoken sharply, as some one tapped at the door; for Colonel Middleton was in great excitement over his news, and he wanted to talk it over with his wife. Therefore he greatly resented the interruption. It was too late, however; the door opened, and a gentleman was announced. Mrs. Middleton went out by another door, and Colonel Middleton advanced to greet the new arrival. He was much too full of his subject to talk long on any other, and at the first pause in the conversation he introduced it.

"My sister, Mrs. Lyndsay, is going to marry Lord Wardlaw."

"I am delighted to hear it! I heard rumours of the kind, but as I was told it was not settled, I did not like to congratulate you. Mrs. Lyndsay has only one child, I think?"

"Only one; a boy. It was on his account chiefly that she hesitated. Her husband died when the boy was a baby, and mother and son have lived so much alone, and been thrown so entirely on each other's companionship, that he has been treated more as a friend and equal than boys of his age

while in London, where he was constantly in Magdalén's society. Old Lyndsay was my father's dearest friend, and was also a great deal at the house. When he saw how matters were going on, he came to my father, and asked him if he wished his daughter to marry a pauper. My dear old father, who would never have noticed anything, however palpable, that was going on right under his eyes, took fright directly; put himself at once into Lyndsay's hands, and begged him to help him out of the scrape. Acting upon his friend's advice, he immediately left town with my sister, on the plea of feeling ill himself and needing change of air.

"Meantime Lyndsay, who had interest just then with the Foreign Office, got Wardlaw this appointment, which he was too poor to refuse; and he proceeded at once to Madrid.

"Shortly afterwards my father died, and my sister found herself alone and penniless, dependent on me, who had already a wife and several children. It was then that Lyndsay stepped forward and laid himself and his fortune at her feet. Hers is a very

THE HEROINE

grateful nature, and she had kindness all her life from her

"During her father's short had been her right hand. A wrong he had done her, she b

"Did you know of it?"

"Believe me, no; or I sh^t her to take such a step without eyes."

"Then how do you know

"I am coming to that, p my story my own way. We eighteen months after his marr

"Was she happy with him

"I believe she was happy have been very dull. To k fifty cannot be much of a c nineteen; and then they liv

Glen-Mervyn, his wild out-of- So I saw very little of them.

to see a doctor for Lyndsay after their marriage. That the illness that ended with h

"I wonder why Wardlaw did not come back when he found she was free."

"You must remember that nothing had passed between them, and that he had no reason to suppose she cared for him. Quite the contrary. For almost the first thing he heard of her after he arrived in Madrid, was the report of her intended marriage. Also he may have been too proud to marry her when she was a rich widow, or he may have resented her marriage, or a hundred things. Anyhow, as we know, he didn't, and it is only a year ago that, by the successive deaths of his father and brothers, he became Lord Wardlaw, with wealth sufficient to enable him to give up his diplomatic career, and to return to England.

"He and Magdalen met again this spring in London. I must own my wife and I secretly hoped that the old intimacy might be renewed, and that we might see her rewarded for her long years of devotion to others. Imagine our disappointment when she left town at the end of June, and returned with her boy to Wales. Rumour, however, was not so silent on the subject as she; and we soon heard

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that she had refused Lord Wardlaw. I wrote to her, urging her to reconsider my suggestion. I urged her not to throw away the chance of happiness, and my wife added her treatises to mine.

"Magdalen answered both letters in a gentle way, thanking us most gratefully for our interest in her, but saying at the same time that she had given the matter a great deal of consideration, and that the conclusion arrived at was final.

"As my sister's only relation, I sent a letter to Wardlaw, and spoke to him on the subject. In the course of our conversation we referred to the secret and somehow or other the truth oozed out for the first time, discovered that both victims of a plot between my father and myself. Lord Wardlaw himself had only discovered it till his return to England, and Mrs. Wardlaw said, had evidently no idea who had made the appointment, nor why it was done. In her own words. 'At the time we were both at each other's inexplicable conduct,

we had been mistaken in supposing *ourselves* cared for. She judged by my accepting an appointment without telling her, or coming to wish her good-bye; and I judged by what Mr. Lyndsay told me, which was that she had begged her father to take her out of town, as she was tired of London and its gaieties. I left England in a state of pique, and the announcement of her intended marriage fell under my eyes very shortly. It seemed to confirm my original impression, which was, that in spite of the disparity of years between them, it was Lyndsay she cared for, and not me at all. I believe I should have enlightened her as to all this; but I could not make up my mind to be the one to lower her son's father in her eyes. Besides, she might have resented it, and I might have done my own cause more harm than good. After all he was her husband afterwards; and probably in that relation he behaved himself so as to wipe out any early offences, and I should have been sorry to tarnish his memory.'

"After this conversation I wrote again to my sister, laying the facts of *the* case plainly before

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her, I feared that, besides
step-father, she might be ha-
idea of being something of true to her-
cessary she should be true
withholding from her the
standing, Lord Wardlaw
strongest arguments in his
him for his such scruples reticence, bi-

"I told her myself.
feeling all the exactly ho-
was, my sister's while wha-
For the answer's sense of
anxiously I waited to this let-
factory one; for though I
make the for my dear
husband's lightest or m-
has accepted conduct yet :
about," said Lord Ward

Colonel Middleton

waited to receive his friend's renewed congratulations. The conversation then branched off to other subjects, and shortly afterwards his friend took his leave, and Colonel Middleton went up into the drawing-room to seek his wife.

He found her surrounded by five o'clock visitors, and saw there was not a chance of speaking to her; so, after talking over his sister's engagement with one or two ladies who knew her, he strolled out of the room, and bethought himself of what he would do next. This was his life. He was always wondering what he would do next.

Rowland Middleton was a man who "hung about" all day. He had nothing to do. If he had had, he would not have done it. He was an easy-going indolent man, who left everything to other people, and found it answered very well. He lived on his wife's fortune, and had no employment of his own. He had sold out of the army on his marriage, and had ever since congratulated himself on having done with the trouble and worry of a constantly recurring occupation.

He was a kind good sort of man, not without

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a certain degree of cleverness and amusing in society; but ended, for he never opened his mind in any way. But he fond of his children, and had an unkind thing in his life.

Such was the man to whom signed the care and responsibility—five sons and three daughters.

He had married young a himself, and perhaps his wife w for him. She was an only ch and had always been accustom way, and been spoilt and made all the energy, all the strength o the fortune that he lacked. Th shire was hers, the house in Lon she was capable of managing it a ing him likewise. He left ever saved him trouble, and she lik particularly the case with the child ton was full of theories on the sul Her children were suffering under

always follows an excess of any kind. The reaction from despotism is anarchy, and again from anarchy it will always be despotism, and so on for ever.

Mrs. Middleton, as a child, had been brought up on the new system of education—where children are, and know they are, the chief objects in the house; are always in their parents' society, and join as they please in every conversation. Mrs. Middleton as a mother had reverted to the system on which her parents had been educated, and brought up her children strictly, assigning to them their school-rooms and their nurseries as their places of abode, and only admitting them to their parents' society at stated times. No child of Mrs. Middleton's ever strolled into the drawing-room at promiscuous hours. There was never any danger of the door opening slowly, and a small head protruding itself somewhere below the handle of the door, while the owner of the head delivered itself of some little remark invented as an excuse for getting into her society. But as Nina Middleton is the heroine of this story, we shall hear more of Mrs. Middleton's system and its results hereafter, and so need

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not animadver^t upon it now, except it affected her husband, of whom we wer

He had never been encouraged upon his children's lesson hours, eit them visits in the school-room, or out walking with him.

By degrees he had ceased to expanionship in his children after th life had fairly begun, especially eldest boys had gone to school, room party consisted of the two 1 this story has already spoken. I him that it was too early or wanted to send for them. T begun their lessons, or just se So he contented himself with ones in the nursery, and seeir times, i.e. luncheon, and fo dressing for dinner. That He was not a man who wou engagement for the sake of And so it often happene luncheon, or late in dressi

little girls did not meet all day. Sometimes he would take them for a walk, and on the hope of this walk the sanguine Cecily lived from day to day.

Mrs. Middleton always had the school-room party down to luncheon. It was the exception she made to the rules of the old system. She considered it a good thing, lest the children should grow shy in their manners or awkward in their ways.

These London luncheons were a great penance to the little girls. Their shut-up school-room life made them shy and sensitive, and the parents' ways with them during that meal were not calculated to help them, diametrically those ways were. For their mother never lost an opportunity of finding fault with them, while Colonel Middleton's way of noticing them was by a kind of fatherly teasing, which, highly amusing to him, was a great, though terror to them, for they never knew

THE HERO

going to say next. It wa
to be "funny" at their e
made him a favourite in
source of dread to his li
were very fond of him; i
doubt that if the questio
of putting to their your
best, your papa or you
to the little Middletons,
very decidedly in Colo-

He never scolded t
in any way; he left a
as they were nicely dr
see him, that was all
pretty little girls, and
quite satisfied with th
head about their chara
his wife complained of
and Cecily "**very childis**
was he at all **concerned**
esses said **Nina was**
Cecily lazy and inatte
naughty sometimes," I

right they should show it in the school-room, and keep their good behaviour for downstairs."

Taking his wife's tone, he called Nina "a queer customer," but he himself seldom saw anything in her to justify his saying so. He noticed certainly that she often flushed angrily, and tossed her head at luncheon when her mother found fault with her, but this he rather admired; he thought it showed she had "a spirit of her own," and he liked it: it became her so well. He had an idea sometimes that she took things rather too strongly. He thought it a pity; he always took things so easy himself; but he supposed she would find out her mistake as life went on.

Nina was what is called "an odd child." She was silent and reserved, singularly undemonstrative, and rather obstinate and self-willed. The nurses called her "haughty," and the governesses called her "cold." Her mother never professed to understand her, and often expressed it as her opinion that she would grow up a **very disagreeable woman**. But her father, though he could not get her to chatter to him as Cecily did, did not discover all

THE HEROINE'S

this in her, or think of her o
a character. He was proud
that he could discover in he
to his sister. Also she was
three eldest being boys. W
girl, he was certainly more
not the same pride in her.
thing, very shy and timid
him, away from her mother
lieved from the fear of his
she would chatter to him as
teased her a great deal; h
was just the sort of child t
was always so affected by
readily that her mother cal
was a very sore point wit
father sometimes converte
or "Silly-Billy," and the
at luncheon before visitor
stant state of anxiety dur

When her school-bo
poor Cecily had a sad t
father's refined teasing

Thrown Together. I.

there was a goose at luncheon, she knew as well as possible that before the carving-knife was plunged in, he would turn to her and say "Drop a tear for your brother." Then if, when she thought him too busily engaged in carving to notice her, she surreptitiously said "Yes" to the servant when he brought her some, her father would be sure to look up and say, "Eating your own brother, unnatural Silly-Billy!" If anyone could have known how the child dreaded Michaelmas Day!

"Why do you eat goose, then?" asked Nina contemptuously one day, when Cecily had been dismissed in tears from the dining-room, because, as her mother said, she couldn't take a joke; "if you didn't eat it, there wouldn't be such a talk about it. It's every Michaelmas Day the same thing."

"It's the apple sauce!" sobbed Cecily.

Sometimes the simple child would be caught unsuspectingly.

"Did I hear you singing **this** morning, Cecily?"

"Me singing? No, papa."

"What was that noise, **then**, in the garden under my window?"

THE HER.

"Noise, papa? I did
the old donkey brayed,
"Exactly; I thought
I knew I could not mis
As we began fond of him all by say
They were the same
call them at the always i
ing with him. right
dullness of their lat
pleasure to them; and
he is debating next, they are in his
as fast as they both be
out in the park. They can, i
ever since they been, =
door, wondering what
like all children, Nina
very much taken up w
and were always putting
the fashion of those w
haps, from the state w

lived, **they** did it more than most **children**; but it is **more** generally done than parents have any idea of. And so it was, that from a few words dropped lately at luncheon, and other ways **too** insignificant to convey any idea except to already sharpened comprehensions, these two young **creatures**, who lived such a shut-up school-room life, that they were not supposed to know of anything **that** went on outside its walls, not only knew that **there** was a secret, but were perfectly aware that it **concerned** their Aunt Magdalen and their Cousin **Mervyn**.

To return to Colonel Middleton. With the strange contradiction which we often **find** in a character, this man, who never took the trouble to manage his own affairs, was very **fond** of managing other people's; and he had always turned his attention very much to those of his **only** sister, the Mrs. Lyndsay whose intended second marriage was causing him such untold satisfaction. To begin with, his sister was a great deal **younger** than himself, so that he had always been accustomed to look upon her as a child. And then she **had** been left a widow when she was so very young. Moreover, she had

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been left with an only son,
and anyone who heard Cc
on the sad position of a v
the help of a husband's adv
trol, would never have supj
dispensed with all three, an
out them. When his sister
bestow many of his idle ho
her, discoursing on the man
the education of children-
she knew him to be profor
did what was the kindest a
listened patiently, and was
in her and in her boy, and
what her own right-minded
her was best; and he, misl
courtesy, would go away pr
ance of having directed her
be very long before he dis
advice had not been taken.
her to send her boy to sch
little fellow was out of pett
say was now a well-grown b

and it was only now and then that it flashed across Colonel Middleton that his nephew was still at home.

It was, however, not entirely for the sake of giving advice to his sister, that Colonel Middleton was so often to be found sitting in her drawing-room when she was in town. He was really fond of her, and there was something about her house and surroundings that he did not find in his own. There was a sense of calm and repose about her which he could not define, and a charm in her society and conversation which always attracted him. Everything in her house went on smoothly; there were no jars. At home, though the children were kept so strict, and there were so many rules and regulations, there was always a noise and a bustle. The fact was, there was no repose about Mrs. Middleton. She was always scolding a servant, or a tradesman, or a child. She never sat in one place long; was always bustling in and out of the room, or going up and down stairs; always writing notes, sending messages, or receiving parcels. Though she had nothing to do with the children's

Mervyn always went up to the nursery without a murmur.

Colonel Middleton himself was always the first to object to such a measure; he was very fond of the boy. He was such a handsome merry little fellow, and so manly and independent; and yet he had such engaging manners, and such pretty caressing ways. There had always been something very attractive about the child ever since he was quite a baby. Colonel Middleton had often been puzzled to think why this child's demeanour was so different to that of his own children. Even the way he came into the room was so different to the shy bored manner in which his children presented themselves. This little fellow always came bounding in, so sure of a welcome, so certain that his appearance in the room was just as great a pleasure to others as it was to himself; so happy to see him. His was the fearless confidence of one who had never known anything but love all his life, and expected it from everything and everybody. Colonel Middleton liked to watch him at his games,

Taffy was a Welshman,
Taffy was a thief.

His own little Cecily would have swam away in her tears at once; but Mervyn, before he was four years old, had learnt to retaliate by calling him "Uncle Rowley-poley," and would retort upon his rhymes by a vigorous

Rowley-poley, gammon and spinach,
Heigho, says Uncle Rowley.

Of course all this was some time before our story opens. As we said before, Mervyn was now a well-grown boy in jacket and trowsers; but the liking for the boy remained in Colonel Middleton, and he still was aware of the difference between him and his own children, though he could not define what it was. At the same time, he never had thought, and did not now think, of comparing his wife's system of education with his sister's; he always felt so sure the former must be right. Besides, he was much too lazy ever to take matters into his own hands. "To take things as they are, and make the best of them," had ever been the practice of his life; and also he was well aware that what could be done

THE HEROINE'S HOME.

with an only child could not be done in the c-
of a large family. He would have been the first
complain if the children became too forward, or v
the least in the way. He liked their society w
he felt inclined for it; but he by no means ,
the trouble of children; and it happened const
in the season that he was so busy amusing hi
that two or three days would elapse witho
coming to speech with his little school-room ,

We left him just now, thinking what he
do next. It occurred to him, as he stood
stairs debating, that his little daughters wou
finished their lessons; and that as he had
hour, he might as well take them out as
thing else. So he ran upstairs, turned c
passage to the school-room, and gave a
whistle. There was no answer at first
repeated it several times. Presently a d
end of the passage opened, and a]
said—

“Is that the Bully that keeps on whi
“No, Silly-Billy, it's me. Come her

Cecily ran up to him, joyfully whispering, us out in the park, papa, *please* do."

"What will mamma and Mademoiselle, say? "Oh, Mademoiselle, won't mind. She thinks, as she's been rather sick."

Colonel Middleton thought Mademoiselle be clever to get *coup-de-vent* on so sultry a day also that sickness was not generally part complaint.

"Why, there's not a breath of wind anywhere," he said.

"Cecily means *coup-de-soleil*," said Nina, standing at the door.

This was much more comprehensible. Colonel Middleton sent a very civil message to Mademoiselle, to the effect that if she would lie down and rest, he would relieve her pupils, and take them out for a walk.

"But make yourselves very smart," he said. "I can't walk with little fellas."

"Sundays, then, I suppose?" said Cecily.

THE HEROINE'S HOME.

"Sundays?" repeated Colonel Middleton,

mystified.

"I mean frocks and hats," she answered.

"Frocks and hats?" he questioned, still more bewildered; "what does she mean, Nina?"

"She means are we to put on our Sunday things, our best things, you know," explained Nina.

"Oh, I see! Yes, your best clothes, certainly, and come into the smoking-room when you are ready."

They joined him in about ten minutes, looking as neat and pretty as any father could desire; he got up and put on his hat.

CHAPTER II.

Children's Lives in the London Season.

"WHERE shall we go?" he said, as he sh
hall-door.

"Oh! the park, papa,—*please*,"—said Ceci
"What makes you so fond of the park?"

"Oh! it's such fun, papa. I like seeing
people riding, and passing the people wh
know, and seeing you take off your hat, or h
your umbrella."

"Hold up my umbrella!"

"Yes. When you see a lady, you alwa
your hat off; but when you see a gentlem
you know, you hold up your umbrella; at le
he's riding you do. If he's walking you li
two fingers, and say 'How *are* you?' Nina
always call them papa's 'how-*are*-yous.' V
them sometimes in the streets or squares wh

CHILDREN IN THE LONDON SEASON.

walking with Mademoiselle, and then we always say to each other, 'How are you?' Don't Nina."

But Nina was looking at a perambulator in the distance, and didn't answer. Cecily, not at all confited, went chattering on.

"Mademoiselle always takes us into Berkeley Square or Kensington Gardens, where there are very 'How-are-yous,' or anything to look at. It's a square?" I re-dall."

"But don't you play games in Berkeley Square? I remember thinking games in a child,"

"Ah! but then you mayn't play with boys; you see, we bore not better than girls. Will you?"

It's a great game in Berkeley Square, getting him self into a mess, and never play with boys?" he said; "So you never

Season.

I, as he shut the

said Cecily.

the park?" like seeing all the people who you hat, or hold up

you always take a gentleman that orella; at least, if you hold up Nina and I you? Nina. We meet quares when we're

"No, hardly ever. There's only one boy
may play with, and he's gone now."

"Who's that?" asked Colonel Middleton.

"Oh, that's Mervyn," said Cecily.

At this moment Nina, who had been lying
behind kissing her hand to the perambulator
had been watching, came running up.

"What were you looking at?" asked her father.

Nina pointed to a perambulator which
crossing the road, in which he recognised his
youngest children.

"Going home to bed I suppose," he said, turning round and shaking his stick at them.
nurses were seen making frantic attempts to incite the children to see and return their father's salutation; but the little occupants of the perambulator looked in every direction but the right one.
eldest kissed his hand in the direction of the father, and the other maintained a stolid indifference to everything and everybody.

"So you play with Mervyn?" resumed Colonel Middleton, as they walked on; and he was silent for some time after, his thoughts wandering off.

Mervyn. He wondered how the boy would take the news of his mother's intended marriage. "Do children in general object to step-fathers and step-mothers?" he asked himself. "Why should they object to the former?" He thought perhaps his little girls might be able to throw some light upon the subject; and never for a moment dreaming that they would be able to follow the course of his thoughts, he asked abruptly: "How should you feel if anyone were to tell you you were going to have a papa?"

Nina saw the drift of the question in a moment, and flushed indignant scarlet up to the eyes. The more simple Cecily was quite innocent of his meaning, and answered directly: "Going to have a papa? Why, we've got one."

"Ah! to be sure, so you have, I forgot," said Colonel Middleton, rather puzzled at seeing the case was not quite analogous. "But I mean, supposing you were told you were going to have a new one?"

"Two papas!" exclaimed Cecily; "why couldn't have two, could we?"

Thrown Together. I.

"No, no, I don't quite mean that. Supposing you'd never had one—— No, bother, how Supposing you had had one and he was dead, should you feel if you were told you were going to have another?"

"I should be crying so about the dead or I shouldn't be able to see the new one," said the tender-hearted Cecily, looking very much afraid, as if she were going to begin at once.

Colonel Middleton got a little afraid of her in the street. He took her hand, and tried to get her out of it. "How can I put it?" he questioned. "Look here," he said; "supposing you couldn't remember your own papa, how would you feel if you were told you were going to have another?"

"Why, that would be like Mervyn," said Cecily; "he can't remember his papa."

"Exactly," said Colonel Middleton eagerly, "how would Mervyn feel?"

But before Cecily could answer, Nina said, "How would he feel? angry, miserable! I .

that. Supposing
other, how is it?
e was dead, how
you were going to

the dead one, that
new one," said the
very much as if she

le afraid of a scene
, and tried to laugh
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aid; "supposing you
papa, how should
were going to have

Mervyn," answered
s papa."

dleton eagerly; "well,

wer, Nina burst in:
erable! He would

never look at him, or speak to him; no more would
I, if I were Mervyn!"

"Whew!" whistled Colonel Middleton. This
was altogether a bad look-out. He walked on
silently for some time, feeling, as he had
twice felt before, when in conversation with his
eldest daughter, that she was a little too much for
him.

This easy-going man had occasionally been
made rather uncomfortable by a look in her eyes,
and by the sense that she altogether took things
much more strongly than he did. He wondered his
now why she had suddenly got so hot about his
question, and glanced curiously now and then, as
they walked on, at the handsome little face by his
side, still flushed with the eagerness with which she
had spoken. He turned to the more shallow Cecily,
and changed the conversation.

While they two chatted away, Nina walked along of
in a perfect storm of indignation. She had
course, in her usual way, put two and two together,
and saw how it all was as clearly as possible. Sym-
pathy for Mervyn and hatred to the imaginary step-
4*

father were the two prominent fee.
heart. She was very fond of her cou.
a great admiration for his character, diffe
it did so entirely from her own. Perha
why she admired it. Their natures we
cally opposed, their way of life utterly
and yet these two children had a fascin
one for the other; so that though Nina co
understand his open unreserve, his dem
ways with his mother, and his entire freed
the sensitive pride by which she was herse
up, yet she could sympathise very strong
him. As she thought of the way in which
was bound up in his mother's, of the way in
he watched over and attended to her, and
always to prefer her society to any othe
they sat together, walked together, rode tog
and then pictured to herself an old ogre or
father coming in between them and marrin
she quite stamped her foot upon the grou
grew hot all over in her sympathetic ind
He would interfere with Mervyn; he wo
haps keep him all day in a school-room

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cousin, and had
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herself was kept, shut out altogether from his
ther's society; he would even perhaps se-
parate him entirely from her, and send him to school.

The crack of the little heel upon the pavemen-
would almost have been audible to her father's ear
had he not at that moment been stopped by a pass-
ing "How are you?"

Colonel Middleton drew his friend on one side
so that the children should not overhear the con-
versation; but Nina was quite able to understand
that her father was being congratulated on her
aunt's marriage; and as the friend moved on, she
caught the words, "Wardlaw is such a charming
fellow."

"Wardlaw!" she muttered to herself; "such a
name, too! I'll never call him Uncle Wardlaw, that
I'm quite determined!"

Colonel Middleton and his little girls were now
standing opposite Stanhope Gate, waiting for an op-
portunity to cross over into the park.

As they stood there, an omnibus passed, loaded
inside and out with passengers. Little Cecily's eyes
wandered all over it, amused to see how covered it

was with human beings. Colonel Middleton was just going to tell her not to stare up at the bus, when, to his horror, he saw her face light up with excitement and recognition. She smiled and nodded repeatedly, and a man, sitting on top of the omnibus, made her a hesitating but respectful bow.

"Cecily," he exclaimed angrily, "what are you about?"

"Didn't you see him, papa?" she answered so excited at the occurrence that she did not notice her father's tone; "and how smart he was! I saw him so smart before. I think he must have been at the Crystal Palace. I suppose it's because he was so smart that you didn't notice him again?"

"What are you talking about?," Middleton, not at all mollified by this said, "How should I or you know a low fellow on top of an omnibus?"

"Papa!" she exclaimed reproachfully, "the clock-man!"

At this moment the policeman made a sign that the road was clear, and they were obliged to cross, so that Cecily's lecture was postponed for a time; but as soon as they got into the park, he said gravely, "Now remember, Cecily, never on any consideration nod to anyone on the top of an omnibus. Young ladies do not do these kind of things. Your mamma would be horrified if she heard of it. Do you hear me?"

"But, papa," persisted Cecily, "he was our own clock-man, who winds up the school-room clock every Saturday; and as its a half holiday, and Mademoiselle in her room, I always have a nice little talk with him, and he is so kind and amusing. So how could I not nod to him when I see him in the streets?"

All this was said in a most plaintive voice, and she looked up to her father imploringly, adding "He is the *nicest* clock-man, and he *does* make school-room clock go so well."

When she first began to speak, Colonel Middleton had been making up his mind not to see the lady who was approaching, who he remembered

once meeting at a croquet party in his own neighbourhood in the country, and who he saw waiting to bow to him; but the look in Cecily's innocent eyes as she asked him how she could i her school-room friend when she met him i street, made him feel rather ashamed of his tition. He felt rebuked by the child's won gaze, and made the lady in question a very bow as she passed. Lucky for him that so, for the moment she was gone Cecily recon her with all the astonishment and excitement children feel at seeing a country friend in L They always seem to think it so extraordina anyone whom they are accustomed to see among fields and hedges should be walking i park like any other person.

"Why, that is the lady that stays son with Mrs. Stapleton! Oh, papa! what a pi didn't stop and speak to her! Why *didn't* stop?"

"My dear, I don't know that I had anyt say to her."

"Oh! I could have thought of such

things. You might have asked after Mrs. Staple silver pheasant, and the guinea-pigs, and so on. May I run after her and call her back besides. *May I run after her and call her back?*

But somehow Colonel Middleton did not belong to the kind to be made. The lady, he said, was allowed to pursue her way unmolested.

Directly after they came to another stop. A tall fair man hailed Colonel Middleton with an appearance of great pleasure, which feeling seemed to be provoked. Cecily saw they were likely to talk some time, so she strayed a little from the group, and leant against the railing, in imitation of some gentlemen she saw doing so, to their great amusement; but Nina, attracted by something in the newcomer's face, stood watching him as he conversed with her father. He laughed very often, and it was such a ringing, pleasant laugh, that she caught herself once or twice laughing too; it sounded so well.

in his own neighbourhood he saw was trying in Cecily's innocence to see if she could ignore him met him in the chanted of his intention child's wondering question a very cordial for him that he did Cecily recognised and excitement which my friend in London so extraordinary that I am used to see only I be walking in the

that stays sometimes
! what a pity you
Why didn't you

I had anything to
of such lots of

cheery. She felt quite glad when she heard father ask him to luncheon the next day, hoped they would continue talking some time, much did she like watching the pleasant face.

Presently she caught his eye, and he came ward smiling kindly, and shook hands with saying, "This is one of your little girls, I am su and asked her her name. She fancied he looked little disappointed at her answer, but he nothing, and resumed his conversation with father.

He seemed very amusing, for Colonel Miction laughed almost as much as he. As he ta Nina could not keep noticing how often he gla at her, and always with an expression of int At last he said good-bye, shaking hands cord with Colonel Middleton, and taking off his with a smile to Nina, which pleased her very n though it made her feel rather shy.

"Come along," said her father. "W Cecily?"

Cecily was engaged in trying to copy th titude of one of the gentlemen she had been w

GETHER.

CHILDREN IN THE LONDON SEAS

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d been watch-

ing. She was standing with her back
ings, and trying to get her elbows on the top,
she might support herself by them, as he was de-
But being many inches too short, the experim-
Colonel Middleton, she gave it up, and joined
and her sister.

Nina longed to know who the stranger was,
for that very reason could not make up her m-

Cecily saved her the trouble.

"Papa," she said, "who is that gentleman?"

"Well, dear," he answered, in as indifferent
manner as he could assume, "I don't know that you
will be much the wiser if I tell you. His name
Lord Wardlaw."

Nina took a step backward, in her astonish-
ment.

"That Lord Wardlaw!" she mentally said, "The
Mervyn's step-father!"

Her feelings with regard to her aunt's marriage
underwent a sudden change. The interfering

ogre disappeared, and she began to think she
not pity Mervyn so very much after all.

"I shall call *him* Uncle Wardlaw," she settled
her own mind.

"We must be going home," said Colonel Mid-
ton, looking at his watch.

"Home?" said Cecily regretfully, "back to
dull old school-room, away from the four-in-ha
and all the fun. Oh dear! what a pity!"

"Well, I am going to do a little shop-
first," said her father, "so I shall not go h-
straight, and perhaps I'll take you back in a
som."

This made up for everything. Cecily's ide-
the height of bliss began and ended in 'a han-
had been to come into it. They turned on
Albert Gate.

"What sort of shop, *papa!*" she said eager-
"That one," he said, pointing to the flo-
shop opposite. "I want to get a flower for
coat."

"Oh dear, that's rather dull!" said Cecily,

They called a hansom outside, and jumped in with great delight. She sat boldly, and indulged in little bows to those by every now and then, unknown to her who was not looking her way.

She threw open the doors with a grace when they stopped, and tried to jump the pavement, as she had so often watched her father do from the second window.

But her legs not being long enough for the operation, she fell short of the curb, splashed into a puddle lately deposited by a water-cart.

"Really, Cecily, you are too clumsy a thing," said her father; "look at your best."

Cecily looked in dismay, and made her way upstairs, in great fear of her mother.

Nina went up to her father and said good-night.

boy cousin, and she did not feel much interest in it.

"Oh, Nina, we'll go to the top of the stairs, and see them all go down to dinner. I've found a better place than ever to see from, where there's plenty of room for two."

When they returned to the school-room it was only a quarter to eight, and therefore too soon for any arrivals. Nina instantly took a book, and sat down upon the floor with it.

Cecily, who had already stationed herself at the window, was in despair.

"Oh! Nina, don't read. I know if you once begin, you'll never leave off to look at the people."

"Yes, I did," said Nina absently; for she was already deep in her book, and hardly heard what her sister was saying. "I can, I mean I should—I shall."

"Oh! you're not attending a bit," said Cecily, despairingly; "you're thinking about that stupid book, and here comes the first carriage and everything. I wish there were no books in the world,

THROWN TOGETHER.

sional remarks—"Ah! quelle belle toilette!
vraiment! Combien c'est comme il faut! Re-
donc! que cette dame est bien mise! Quelle char-
mant coiffure!"

"A hansom! A hansom! and a 'How-art-
it,' exclaimed Cecily, drawing in her head.
I do believe it's the same we met in the park."

Down went Nina's book, and she was at her
sister's side in a moment. She was only just in
time to see a tall man pay his cab, and run up the
steps. But she was disappointed, for it was not
Lord Wardlaw, or anyone the least like him.

"How could you say it was one we saw in the
park, Cecily! He was tall and fair, and this man
has got nasty dark hair, quite black and oily.
Phaugh!" And Nina made a gesture of disgust.

Cecily took it up rather warmly. "Dark hair
isn't nasty a bit, and I'm sure he's a very
kind man. He spoke so kindly to the cabman when I
next door by mistake, and didn't hollered
at him like some people would, and
fool."

CHILDREN IN THE LONDON SEASON.

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call him a

"Cécile Cécile," said Mademoiselle reproving
catching only the last word, "Taisez-vous donc."

Thus rebuked, Cecily turned again to
window, muttering as she did so, "Besides
fair man isn't the only 'How-are-you' in
world."

But to Nina just now he was, for her thoughts
were full of Mervyn, and she wanted to know more
of the man who was to bring such a change in
his life. So she made no objection when Cecily
presently suggested that it was time they should
and establish themselves on the staircase, for she
wanted to satisfy herself whether Lord Wardlaw would
of the party or not.

Mademoiselle agreed to the plan on condition
that they would promise not to make a noise,
let themselves be seen, and also that they would
return very soon, as it was time for Cecily to go to
bed. She herself remained behind to have
supper. Her head, she said, was still bad, and
was probable she should retire early. The two girls
wished her good-night, and ran down the stairs.

stairs, settling themselves in a corner where they could see without being seen.

The drawing-room doors were open, and they could hear a faint buzz of conversation every now and then rise and die away almost directly, to begin again in another part of the room, with the same melancholy result. Their mother's clear decided tones rose above the rest every now and then, as if she were making an effort to suggest topics which might furnish some sort of spasmodic conversation to cheer the gloomy interval between the arrival of the guests and the announcement of dinner. At last the butler came up the stairs, and went into the drawing-room.

There was a moment's greater silence than ever, and then, with a rush and a roar, conversation sprang up. Then came the rustling of gowns and the tramp of many feet, the sound of many voices, and mingled laughter, getting nearer and nearer to the children as the party streamed out on the landing and passed down the stairs.

It seemed as if each man had for many weeks kept pent up within him a certain conversation he

CHILDREN IN THE LONDON SEASON.

wished to hold with the particular lady, who was consigned to him to take down to dinner, and that now, at last, the opportunity had come.

Nina and Cecily felt quite deafened by the torrent of words which swept past them—“What chatter-boxes!” muttered Cecily, but she was called to order by a frown from her elder sister.

First came their father, good-looking, cheerful, and witty, evoking light rippling laughter from the pretty woman on his arm, while his attention was divided between her and Nina’s yellow rose-bud, which he was re-arranging in his button-hole. Then, two and two, came the guests, strangers to the children mostly, though they sometimes recognised faces they knew in open carriages and an occasional “How-are-you;” but Nina looked in vain for Lord Wardlaw. Last of all, on the arm of some foreign prince, erect, well-dressed, and self-dependent, came the children’s mother.

Clear and loud were her tones as she discoursed with him in his own language, every word of which was intelligible to her eldest daughter. Any close

observer would have seen Nina shrink into herself a little as her mother swept out upon the landing, as if there were something in that mother's appearance and manner which jarred a little upon the child's sensitive organisation. Nay, more, as if her very presence excited some curious feeling within her; for her cheeks flushed a little, and her eyes fell, while into the corners of the tightly compressed little mouth crept an expression which was not fear, nor dislike, nor contempt, but which partook a little of all three, and was gone before one could be certain it had been there at all, changing into keen interest and excitement as her mother's words reached her. "So you knew Lord Wardlaw abroad, and think my sister-in-law a very lucky person? So do I. . . . Yes, there is a boy; but, of course he will go to school, and" Here the decided tones died away in the distance, and were lost in the hum of voices which now proceeded from the dining-room.

Had Nina followed the company downstairs, she would have heard plenty about Lord Wardlaw; for during the two first courses he and his mar-

CHILDREN IN THE LONDON SEASON.

riage, and his previous history, formed ^{one the chief} subjects of conversation. There was but ^{one the} opinion as to himself. He was charming. The verdict was unanimous. Opinions as to whether Lord Wardlaw or Mrs. Lyndsay was the "lucky one" were divided. Some thought the luck on his side, in possessing such a pretty charming wife ^{as Colonel Middleton's sister.} Others, sitting a good way from Colonel Middleton, thought it on hers. A young man like Lord Wardlaw, with a fair fortune: who might have married any of the pretty London girls of the day, had he been so disposed. Others aside to each other, thought a rich widow a great windfall. Others again, still aside, thought the boy a terrible stumbling-block. Some rejoiced at the constancy of affection displayed by Lord Wardlaw. "That sort of thing is so rare in these days." Colonel Middleton told the whole story of the early friendship from his end of the table, while his wife told it from hers. By degrees, the conversation branched off to other subjects, with which we have nothing to do. So now, while the champagne goes round, and the clatter of voices and laughter sounds

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rd Wardlaw;
nd his mar-

up the staircase, let us return to the school-room, and follow the young lives there.

It is nearly nine o'clock, and Cecily has gone to bed. Mademoiselle, still suffering from her headache, has also retired, and in the rapidly darkening school-room Nina sits alone. She has been reading by the fading light, and the book is still open in her hand; but now she is leaning against the window-sill, looking out into the street. It is wide open. Not much to be seen of interest there: an organ below is playing a popular air, but otherwise the street is almost deserted, for the roll of dinner-carriages is over, and that of the later entertainments not yet begun. Truly the only thing of interest is the handsome little face itself.

The face is a curious mixture: the soft dreamy eyes contrast so sharply with the firm, I had almost said hard, little mouth. A varying face, for its earnest thoughtful expression now is as different as possible from that which stole over it on the staircase not half-an-hour ago.

Sad that the sight of a mother should have the

CHILDREN IN THE LONDON SEASON.

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power to call up such an expression. It seemed, alas! was not a solitary instance. It seemed, if there were something antagonistic in indeed, positions of mother and daughter; so the d positions of mother and daughter; so utterly different was their organisation, that it appeared hopeless that they should ever understand one another. Mutual love and forbearance would have done Patience on the one side and reverence on the other might have drawn them together; but happily these feelings were unknown by either mother or daughter.

No doubt Nina was not easy to understand, nor was she a winning or attractive child. No, she was as her mother said, "an odd child;" one of those children who go by the opprobrium "difficult"—God help them! for few others will.

Cold, proud, indifferent.

Let us watch her a little before we join in the verdict ourselves.

The July evening is coming to a close. The organ has strayed farther away. Every now and then snatches of chorus' sound from Park Lane, the merry little street-boys return from bathing

THROWN TOGETHER.

the Serpentine. Everything speaks of the end of the busy day, and Nina rouses herself from her reverie, and looks at the school-room clock.

It is past nine, and she puts away her book, and prepares to leave the room. But first she stoops down and takes off her shoes. Then, very quietly, almost stealthily, the child opens the school-room door, and passes along the passage, and up the stairs.

Her bed-room door is open, and Cecily's voice is heard from within, singing little songs to herself, to beguile the time while she is waiting for her sister. But Nina brushes past, and turns down a passage which corresponds with the school-room one below. Where can the child be going?

Here a door stands partly open, and Nina hesitates a moment before she passes it. Voices and laughter from within, and the clatter of plates and dishes, intimate that the nurses are at supper, and very quietly she creeps past, as if afraid of being discovered. Very, very quietly, and enters with a noiseless step a darkened room a little farther on.

A night-light burns dimly on the table, and

Nina stands by the door till her eyes get sufficiently accustomed to the subdued light to be able to distinguish the different objects in the room.

A big bed, a small bed, and two cribs, proclaim the bed-room nursery. The big bed is empty, but three sleeping children occupy the others.

The big bed is empty, but
the little children occupy the others.
In a little bed by itself lies a big rosy boy
about five, and in the crib next the wall a rosy
baby girl.

Without glancing at these two, Nina passes on to the crib on the other side of the big bed, and stands at its foot, motionless. A restless sleeper this. The bed-clothes are tossed about in every direction, the little face on the pillow is flushed, and the long fair hair all in disorder. He cannot have been asleep long, nor does he seem to sleep soundly now, for disjointed words proceed from his lips, and he stirs uneasily. He must, judging by the profusion of hair, and general aspect of the bust, be at least three years old; his face and hands are scarcely as large as those of the baby-sister who sleeps so sound in the crib opposite. The little hand and arm that lie outside

the coverlet are thin and small, and sadly
the veins in the transparent forehead. blue are

And now let us take one glance at the face of
the child who is cold, hard, indifferent.

Where is the look of haughty indifference with
which it received her mother's message? Where is
the look of supercilious contempt with which it
watched that mother on the stairs? Where is even
the firm tightly-compressed little mouth?

Gone! all gone!—all merged in an expression
of yearning tenderness, of passionate affection, which
pervades and beautifies the entire countenance.

The child's whole soul is in her face as she
gazes at her little invalid brother. Gazes, gazes, as
if she could never gaze enough.

Going to his side at last, she bends over him,
and tries to arrange the rumpled bed-clothes and
to relieve the hot forehead of the tangled dis-
ordered hair. Bending closer still, she impresses
tender kisses on his pillow, on the sheet, on his
hair; and, as she does it, she whispers softly, "Good-
night, Totty, good-night!"

Then returning to the foot of the crib, she stands there for a few minutes, as if to assure herself his sleep is sound. It seemed as though she fears it is so light a slumber that he may waken any moment and find the nurses not yet come to bed, for she appears loth to leave him.

Is she going to keep a lonely vigil till that time shall come? for she twines her arms around the bars of his crib, and lays her head upon them.

No; she is only repeating to herself, ere she leaves him in the darkness, the old rhyme, slightly varied, with which many a nervous child has soothed itself to sleep amid the fancied terrors of a lonely room.

Four corners to his bed,
Four angels round his head,
One to watch, two to pray,
And one to keep all fears away.

The regular breathing of the other children heard in the stillness as she stands there watching ~~is~~, and the sound seems to irritate her a little, as ~~it~~ their health and strength contrasted painfully in her mind with the frail little sleeper before her.

But Totty does not stir again, and she is satisfied.

Her dark eyes seem to glow with the intensity of the love within her, as she takes a farewell gaze, and without one glance at the other beds she retires as noiselessly as she came; turning once more ere she passes into the lighted passage, to kiss her hand to the little sleeper, and to murmur softly, "Good-night, Totty, good-night!" Then quickly and hastily she goes down the stairs, and regains her own room.

Night after night, unknown to all, suspected by none, does the child pay this noiseless visit. Night after night does the little figure steal up the staircase, shoes in hand, and disappear in the darkened room. She is always more or less in fear of detection, but never yet has she been discovered.

Mademoiselle always supposes her in her bedroom, Cecily supposes her with Mademoiselle; housemaids and nurses are alike busy at their supper; and so hitherto she has escaped.

It may be that He unto whom all hearts are open, and whose pity is equal to his power, ordered

that it should be so, and gave his angels charge concerning her, to keep all hindrances away. It may be that He was leading the wayward child to Himself, through her love for her baby brother; lest in the lovelessness of the atmosphere in which she lived, the little heart should really come to be as cold and hard as it was there considered, and so should never rise into the experience of that higher love which is in itself both God and heaven.

"For it is through the gush of our human tenderness that the soul first learns its destiny divine; it is through a mortal yearning, unsatisfied, that the soul ascends, seeking a higher object; it is through our human affections that the immortal and the infinite in us reveals itself."

The voices of the ladies returning to the drawing-room came up the stairs half an hour after, and roused Nina from her dreamless sleep. She woke with a beating heart, for she was startled and confused, and she dreamily fancied Totty must be ill, and that the voices she heard were those of alarmed nurses. By degrees she remembered

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it all meant, and with a sigh of relief she lay down again. But the moment's fear had unsettled her, and she could not get to sleep.

She lay, wondering whether the voices had disturbed Totty too; and if so, whether he would find the nurses come to bed or not. Vague fears haunted her of his lying awake frightened, and not able to make himself heard. She could not calm herself about it, except by repeating the soothing rhymes over and over again; and sleep overtook her, dreamily murmuring—

Four corners to his bed,
Four angels round his head,
One to watch, two to pray,
And one to keep all fears away.

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Middleton's Rules and Regulations.

MRS. MIDDLETON was, as we have said, a woman of theory, and her theories on the subject of the education and training of children were very decided. Her system, as she imagined, combined the advantages of the old system and the advantages of the new.

"Children now-a-days," said Mrs. Middleton, "were too much made of, took too prominent a part in the household economy, and were taught to think themselves of too great importance. They came too forward altogether, and were too much with their parents, to the exclusion, on the one hand, of many topics of conversation; or to the hearing a great deal that was not intended for their ears, on the other. The nursery and the school-room were the proper places for them, regular walks with their nurses or governesses quite change

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enough, and fixed early hours for rising and going to bed."

Prompt obedience to herself she exacted; quick unanswering submission to every order. All very well in its way. But the fault in Mrs. Middleton's system was, that there was no confidence or love between her and her children—no interchange of thought and affection.

She did not see enough of them to understand them; she did not watch or study them at all; so short; or, indeed, that a system which succeeded with one child might possibly fail with another; that all children are not alike; and that where characters and temperaments differ, methods of training should differ also, or at least be modified and adapted.

Strong in the knowledge that her system had had great success with her three elder boys, she was firm in her own confident opinion that her theories were perfect, and her practice more perfect still.

It so happened, that with her three easy-going,

thick-skinned boys, it had all answered *very well*; but she failed to see that she had in her little daughters totally different characters to deal with.

Nina was a child who could have been led through her affections, had those affections been drawn out; but this "driving" system only stirred up her pride and self-will. Sensitive to the last degree, she had learnt to be ashamed of the deep feelings which she felt within her, and to call up pride to help her to overcome and conceal them: and that pride had now become so completely a second nature, that she daily acted an indifference to everything and everybody that she did not really feel.

Cecily, timid and nervous, was a child who needed protection and help, and who should have been encouraged to overcome her self-consciousness and fear of ridicule; and have been taught that she could depend upon her mother's love and assistance—instead of which she feared her, and never felt at ease in her presence.

Outwardly, they were no doubt well-behaved and submissive. But their good behaviour
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merely a mask worn in their mother's presence, which concealed their real selves from her and from others. There was no deep feeling at work in their hearts. There was never any appeal made to their affections; to their sense of right, or their individual responsibility—no inculcation of principle, on which a superstructure of religion might be built. If they did wrong they were punished—that was all. Neither was punishment ever followed up by forgiveness and advice. They were never taught that their failings made their mother unhappy, and that for her sake they ought to try and not offend again—a doctrine which conveys so forcibly to young minds that their sins are displeasing to God, and that out of love to Him more than out of fear they should strive to overcome them. No! Nothing of all this. Nothing but the fear of punishment, and the dread of public remark. But, after all, it was not so much the training as the mother herself. Had her example been always good and attractive, her system might have succeeded better. Her own character was all unformed and undisciplined; she had not educated or trained herself,

therefore how was it possible she could rightly train and educate others. The fact was, she was intensely selfish. She was an only child and an heiress. She had always been indulged in everything, and been accustomed to have her own way, and to be worshipped and flattered by all. She had a strong will, a quick temper, and an immense idea of her own importance. She was clever, managing, determined; worldly, and very ambitious. Was this a person likely to enter into all the difficulties and trials of child life?—to put herself in her children's place, and to view the unfolding chart of life with their wondering puzzled eyes? No! She had her place in the world, and the children had theirs. Hers immeasurably superior and important—theirs less than secondary, simply subservient to her, and to her will.

Some day it would be different, perhaps. As grown-up girls and boys she might hereafter allow them to assume some individuality; but at present they were just children—a mere flock of sheep to be driven according to her way, without any distinction. She made certain rules, and they were dis-

follow them—that was all. If they didn't, they were punished—there was no middle course. She was not fond of children. A child was to her raw material, out of which something might be made some day; but as a *child* it did not interest her. The society of children gave her no pleasure.

Perhaps this arose from idleness, perhaps from selfishness, perhaps from stupidity.

She found it a great trouble to provide answers to their questions, and was bored to find that when she had answered one it gave rise to another. She was too selfish to come down from the heights of her own mature reflections, and to lower herself to the level of the baby questioner. Perhaps, in spite of her vaunted cleverness, she was too stupid or too ignorant to satisfy their curiosity. It requires no small amount of knowledge to parry successfully the questions of an enquiring child-mind.

The questioning child is never the favourite in the nursery, because it is often beyond the nurse's power to satisfy its thirst for information; and so she is often floored, and feels lowered by having her ignorance exposed.

Anyhow, from whatever cause it arose, Mrs. Middleton was not fond of children; she did not understand them; she had not realized that ~~she~~ must be put on one side before she could ~~really~~ train or influence them; and the consequence was that she had no real influence over them, and ~~they~~ neither loved nor respected her.

Of direct attempts there was no lack. Lecture by the hour would Mrs. Middleton; precept upon precept, rule upon rule, she would sometimes show upon her little daughters when complaints against them were brought before her. But they saw ~~her~~ at times when she was not thinking of them, and they had, alas! learnt to discover her inconsistencies, and to compare the purity of her theories with the faultiness of her practice. What was the good, for instance, of her punishing them for an outbreak of temper, when they could see, by her flushing cheek and raised voice, that her own was not under control? Did they not intuitively feel that it was not so much that they had sinned, as that they had wounded their mother's *amour propre*, or irritated her nervous temper; and that they were suffering

from revenge, not punishment; that it was only because they were the weaker that they went to the wall, since the sin was the same on both sides?

Vain was her teaching while her conduct was at variance with it. For there is a great and important difference between direct and indirect influence, which is well defined thus: "Our direct efforts to teach may be contradicted by our lives, while the indirect influence is our very life."

Strict is the watch a mother should keep over herself in her children's presence, lest they lose belief in the goodness, justice, and love which is to lead them to God, and of which, till they know Him, she is to them the embodiment. Let them believe in one person, though all others fail them. She should be on her guard lest their sense of right and justice get marred by her inconsistency, their affections chilled by her changeability, or their minds confused in striving to reconcile her teaching with her daily conduct.

Surely a mother's should indeed be a *life of prayer* while contending with such difficulties as these, for she is but ~~human~~ herself. But with such

an end in view it is worth the struggle, ~~for all~~ through life her children will have the memory ~~of~~ at least one person whom they could safely believe ~~in~~ in, and be helped by that recollection, even ~~amid~~ all the sin and darkness around them, to have ~~faith~~ in the divinity of this human nature which Saviour condescended to assume. In that other ~~out~~ mother in our story, to whom we have only, as ~~yet~~ slightly alluded, was a bright pattern and example for ever before Mrs. Middleton; but her eyes were closed to her young sister-in-law's merits, and she saw no ways perfect but her own.

Magdalen Lyndsay had, in the training of ~~her~~ boy, acted in every way contrary to Mrs. Middleton's ideas, and Mrs. Middleton despised her system accordingly. But the fact was, Magdalen Lyndsay had no "system." Love and complete confidence existed between her and her boy, and on that foundation she built.

Mervyn had never had any inconsistencies confuse him in his mother, or anything to shake firm abiding belief in her. He knew that when obedience was exacted from him which conflicted ~~to~~ ~~his~~ ~~an~~ ~~and~~ ~~confused~~

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with his own wishes, that it was for the love of him, or for some wise reason, that it was demanded. He looked for, and expected, the cheering tone of encouragement, the bright smile of approval; and with the help of them, and for the sake of them, he made efforts to overcome his faults, the very idea of which would have been greek to Nina Midleton.

Magdalen had never brought Self to bear in any way against her boy; she had never allowed herself to be personally irritated by his faults, or outwardly vexed if her time was broken in upon.

Ten times out of twenty these are the real causes of children's offences. It is not so much *what* they are saying or *doing* at the time, as that they have chosen a time, *which* is inconvenient to us for saying or doing *it*; and had it happened when we were disengaged, or been in a different frame of mind, or better temper, we should have seen no offence in it. No wonder that children get puzzled when they find *that what* passed without remark one day is a terrible offence the next, and

s looked upon as a crime *yesterday*
with impunity to-day.
had been alive to all these dangers,
even to steer clear of them. All she
ern was reverence and obedience; ~~and~~
had never, as yet, failed to render.
to be sure, had Nina; obedience
as her mother knew. But herein ~~laid~~
~~she~~. Mervyn's character was as an ~~un-~~
to his mother, and she knew every ~~part~~
she could answer for him as for herself
as a sealed book to hers; and if ~~Mrs-~~
thought she could answer for her, ~~or~~
in her obedience, it was only because
ought about it at all. She had no more
strength of character, the strength
of will, or the power of resistance
which lay behind the girl's impassive
she had of the powers of affection
there equally hidden.
one knew what went on in the heart
who was called "odd, cold, unaccountable"

No one guessed what depths of tenderness existed under her apparent indifference; walled in, and kept down by the sensitive pride which had become a second nature.

Long had they lain there dormant, unsuspected and uncalled for, till the birth of little Totty, the first of all Mrs. Middleton's children who had not been a highly satisfactory baby—a baby that she was proud to show if sent for—fine, forward, and healthy.

Till he appeared, Mrs. Middleton's babies had all been framed after the same pattern; had stood their vaccination well, cut their teeth at the proper time, ran alone when she thought it time they should do so, fallen into all her plans for their feeding and sleeping, and yielded to treatment directly if by any chance they fell ill.

But alas! poor little Totty was a sad exception to all this. A wailing, suffering baby from his birth, he ran counter to his mother's rules in every way. He was weeks getting over his vaccination; he cut every tooth late;

ge the others ran alone; and at two
had still to be put to sleep by being
l down the room. Perhaps this was
eton's eyes, the greatest offence of all
f her most stringent rules, and no
good one, that her babies should,
ge as possible, be put into bed, and
sleep by themselves. The others had
the way of it very soon, as healthy
but with Totty it was almost an imp
He would lie awake for hours crying,
d and hushed like a baby.

ng time Mrs. Middleton had persevered;
were obliged to obey her, and poor
o be put into his crib awake, to cry
leep alone. But no one could bear
ll of the delicate child proceeding from
n-nursery, and the nurses often broke
. Middleton's rules. It was no diffi
e she so seldom visited the nurser
wn rules, and took it for granted
ed, but she was by no means
h the children to see that they
from
oke
cult
ries.
they
often
were

carried out. So it was only by chance that she every now and then discovered that Totty was still put to sleep. Each time she put a stop to it, and laid down stricter regulations than ever. But it was no use. Totty suffered from want of sleep or exhaustion from crying; and even the doctor at last told Mrs. Middleton that the child must, for his health's sake, be humoured, till he was older and stronger. It was her first defeat. As he grew older she renewed her attempts to get him into better habits, but seldom with any success.

It was never clearly given out what was the matter with Totty; but the real truth was there was something the matter with his spine, which the doctors greatly feared would one day develop into distinct disease of the spine. But it had by no means reached that stage yet. He could stand alone now; but though nearly four years old, he rarely attempted to walk, neither did the doctors wish that he should. His chest was delicate, too, and he had once had an attack of inflammation of the lungs, which had left him very liable to catch bad colds.

MIDDLETON'S REGULATIONS.

lovely little fellow, and singularly ~~in~~
ugh he might fall short of his ~~brothers~~
many ways, in face there was not ~~on~~
any way compare with him. But ~~a~~
~~an~~ like Mrs. Middleton was not ~~con~~
She looked on to the future, ~~an~~
day would never come when ~~sp~~
~~ud~~ of this son as she would be of ~~th~~
had been in the case of a girl, it wo~~ul~~
ttered so very much; but a delicate

Totty's deficiencies would not have been if he had not, when he was eighteen been succeeded by a baby sister who came up to the standard of the Middleton was even stronger, finer, and more for- walked, in short, in all the paths MRS. had marked out; and who raced after Totty with such speed, that now, at half, she ran about out-of-doors, while was driven in a perambulator.

and to begin with, the tiny ailing child, who seemed always crying and in pain, excited her pity; it was such a new thing in their nursery. With a child's quickness, she soon began to suspect that her mother was a little bit annoyed by it, and was rather ashamed of the puny, pale-faced baby. Mooning over it by herself, the suspicion became daily more confirmed in her mind; and any chance word that Mrs. Middleton let fall upon the subject strengthened it, till at last it became a certainty. From thinking Totty was overlooked, she grew to think he was despised; and from allowing to herself that he was despised, she persuaded herself that he was ill-treated. Then woke there up in her heart the pity that is akin to love. Then came the sense of loving protection towards the sickly child, and the determination to take its part against everybody, and to be to it the defender that it seemed to her to need so much. Alas! that so pure a feeling should have been mixed with antagonistic ill-will towards her mother; so that Nina was both at her best, and at her worst, when she loved her little brother.

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Day by day her love for him deepened. It grew with her growth, and strengthened with her strength; while, with characteristic pride, she strove to hide it from her mother and from everyone. It was no cherished secret, and such it remained; one, except perhaps the nurse, guessed

Nina's character in the house was that she was fond of children; that she did not care for her brother and sisters.

y grew older and Nina loved him more
he grew so sensitive about him that he
er. I.

heart would beat when his name was mentioned, and his constitution discussed; and to hide it, she always put on an air of indifference whenever he was spoken of, which gave a very different impression to the outsider than the real one.

When Totty was succeeded by another baby, she felt him to become more hers than ever. Deeper and deeper grew her love and her pity, when she saw the other child wax stronger and finer month by month, while poor little Totty seemed to make no progress at all; and angry feelings would rise in her heart when she heard one child held up to the deterioration of the other. She could not bear to hear them compared, and her heart would beat loudly when she heard hints every now and then dropped in the nursery that the baby would walk first. How anxiously she watched them both; and how to the last she hoped against hope!

Yet, as we have said, at eighteen months the baby ran about everywhere, while Totty looked on from his perambulator. No one knew the storm of

ling which swept over the child when Totty was
only overlooked, by being left in the nursery,
the baby was sent for to see visitors in the
wing-room.

Poor child! the complications of troubles that
went through on his account were many; but
in spite of them all, it was better for her and
bier than that indifference to everything and
body which had distinguished her before she
a Totty on whom to expend her affection. And
er mother had never noticed the change,
was perfectly ignorant of the girl's power of
on!

Middleton had indeed a good deal to dis-
She was content, so far, with the outward
g of good behaviour Nina wore in her pre-
but she had yet to learn what an obedience
which is not founded on religion, love, or
n. There was an expression sometimes in
some little face which would have led an
erver to wonder how far that outward
ould avail if any real cause of antagonism
arise, and to fancy that, if it should

ever be thrown off, it would be war to the knife between mother and daughter! Whether such a fancy would be correct or not, the events of the story will show.

CHAPTER IV.

The new Relation at Luncheon.

THERE was something the matter with Mademoiselle next morning at breakfast, for she was and moody, and hardly answered Nina when asked her if she didn't think the butter was better iced than usual.

It was evident that Nina was rather in disgrace, seeing how matters stood, Mademoiselle's manner to Cecily was quite different, simply refrained from any further conversation, and ate her breakfast in There was a new-comer at breakfast—the dear-old boy, by name Edmund. He had his school-room life by breakfasting with and taking his morning walk with them—by way of familiarising him with the language, as no other was allowed to be such times. Conversation at breakfast under all these circumstances, flow rapidly.

Edmund, to whom
the charm of nove
ruddy countenanc
own part in the
vous plait," when
and "Merci" (by
"Mercy"), when
long sentence
Cecily elicited
talking rubbish

Cecily was,
a fit of gigglin
Mademoiselle
sent them all
in a terrible
through a ce
band, on the
room party
them. The
in front, N
come to th
calls the li
to join hei

THE NEW RELATION AT LUNCHEON.

"What's the matter with Mademoiselle, Cecily?"
"I don't know. She was all right at breakfast
when you came down, and was talking away to
about her headache and how she couldn't get
sleep, and all that sort of thing." Nina was
She saw now the reason of the gloom.
had omitted to ask after Mademoiselle's
ache!

What made her talk about it?" she asked
antly.

Oh, I asked her if it was gone when she came
" answered Cecily, "and so then she told me
out it."

ow this was a very old offence of Nina's. She
could make up her mind to ask people after
headaches, and other little ailments. What
e most simple everyday affair to most people,
great difficulty to her.

ear this little heroine of mine will seem to
people a very disagreeable character, and
I think her mother fully justified in holding
nion. It will, indeed, require the power of
the soul of goodness in things evil" to make

them a little patient with her. But so many weaknesses spring from perverted good, and so many follies have their root in virtues, that perhaps the germ of good in the child's peculiar disposition may be found, if searched for. As extravagance springs often-times from lavish generosity; gossip, and curiosity from an over-kindly interest in the affairs of others; so perhaps this want of courtesy and kindness in Nina might spring from the innate truthfulness of the child's nature, over-strained and far-fetched though it might be. She was afraid of seeming more interested in the person than she really was; she could not say she was sorry when she knew she was not really grieved. Her idea of being sorry was something so very different. She did not, she told herself, know how to *look* while the person was answering her question. She couldn't be affected, and put *on* looks. If she might just run in and say "How is your headache?" and rush away without waiting for the answer, she wouldn't mind half so much; but the standing there listening, and then not knowing what to say next, or how soon to begin talking of something else, all this

THE NEW RELATION AT LUNCHEON.

courteous enquiry a very difficult matter to Middleton.

At any rate it is too late now," she told her
s she walked silently along by Cecily's side.
cily was, as usual, full of talk.
say, Nina, you know a tandem, and you
a four-in-hand?"

es," said Nina, "what of them?"
hat do you call a thing that is neither a
nor a four-in-hand?"

extreme vagueness of the question made
hesitate.

tell you all that it *isn't*," continued Cecily,
en you can tell me what it *is* easier. It
arouche, nor a brougham, nor a dog-cart;
break, nor an omnibus, nor a t-cart, nor
car, nor a waggonette, nor a landau, nor
age, nor a cabriolet, nor Oh
so tired! Well, Nina, it's none
what can it be?"

"is it like?" asked Nina, "and where did
t three horses, one in front of the other,"

answered Cecily, "and I saw it in the mews from my bed-room window. I'm sure it's quite a new thing, for I never saw it before."

"I can't think what it can be," said Nina.

"Perhaps it will be there when we go home," said Cecily. "I *wanted* so to see it start, but Mademoiselle called me just as the last horse was put in."

They were just entering Kensington Gardens as she spoke, and Edmund, released from Mademoiselle, came running up to ask Cecily to play at horses, and the little sisters' conversation came to an end.

Kensington Gardens and Rotten Row, at that early hour on a summer's morning, present a very different appearance to Kensington Gardens and Rotten Row a few hours later in the day. From half-past eight to half-past ten or eleven, both are quite given up, as it were, to children.

Before the heat of the day has begun—while the trees wear that peculiar bright green which the day's dust will turn into brown, while the morning air is fresh and sweet—reigns all along the length

the Serpentine what may be called "the child's hour." There are tiny ponies, with tiny
, sometimes led by grooms walking at the
old coachmen by long leading-reins. Babies

where the nurse walks; plucky little boys tear-
along at a hand-gallop; little girls with stream-
hair racing after them, as quick as the groom
allow. They mostly laugh and talk as they
along, and their voices sound merry in the
summer air, and their bright hair looks brighter
in the summer sunshine.

ongside, within the railings, are all the littles.
They look so cool and fresh in their
holland costumes, and shady hats—parti-
the babies, who lie lazily back in their
ululators, under the great shady awnings.

re is a pleasant hum of voices and laughter
d about, mingled with the clink of the
harness, and the refreshing sound of neigh-
water-carts.

Serpentine looks cool and clear, gleaming;

in the sun; and the din of London traffic is so mellowed by distance, as to be rather soothing than otherwise.

The scene altogether is so different to what it will be a few hours later, when to the lightheartedness and carelessness of the "children's hour" will succeed one known well enough without description; when youth and beauty and fashion will crowd into the park, bringing with them cares, and aims, and interests unknown as yet to the chattering throng in full possession now.

Punctual at eleven the little Middletons left the Park, and proceeded home. The town was beginning to stir as they reached Grosvenor Gate, and Cecily sighed deeply at the thought of returning to lessons. She flew to her window directly she got into her bed-room, but there was no sign as yet of the carriage she had mentioned to Nina.

Lessons occupied the rest of the morning, and at a quarter to two they were sent upstairs to get ready for luncheon. Cecily's head was out of the window in a moment, and as quickly drawn in.

"Nina! here it is, just come home; the three
orses and all! Do come and look."

Nina was washing her hands, and couldn't come
irectly.

"There are two gentlemen besides grooms. One
that young one we so often see, and a new one.
e looks like a 'How-are-you?' but I'm not quite
re. Now they've got out, and are patting the
urses. Do come!"

Nina advanced to the window, and a deep
our overspread her face when, in the new gen-
an, she recognised Lord Wardlaw.

"Do you know what it's called?" exclaimed

y, excitedly; "isn't it a jolly carriage?"

No, I don't," Nina said absently, her eyes in-
on the figure below; "and Cecily, you'll be

you don't get ready."

remained gazing at Lord Wardlaw, and was
of Mervyn. She felt almost sure he was
longed to write and tell Mervyn so. He
ing to the groom about one of the horse's
he seemed so kind about it. The other Lord
eemed to be pooh-poohing it, but Lord

Wardlaw seemed to be insisting on having it attended to, and examined it carefully himself. Then a little child ran out of the stables, and he turned round and patted its head, and stooped down and talked to it. Nina thought she saw him put his hand in his pocket and put something into the child's hand, but was not quite sure. Then he spoke to his friend, and pointed to the house.

"He is saying he is coming here to luncheon," thought Nina, and she blushed.

The other man seemed to say he would come too; and they walked off together, arm-in-arm. But as they went Nina noticed that Lord Wardlaw did not forget to turn round and nod to the little child he had been talking to, who stood in the middle of the road staring after them.

All this time Cecily had not begun to get ready; she had been so taken up with the horses and the new kind of carriage. To her horror the gong sounded, and Mademoiselle came in to fetch them.

"Oh, what shall I do!" she exclaimed.

Mademoiselle answered, she must come down alone, as it was better for one to be late than three.

THE NEW RELATION AT LUNCHEON.

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so she and Nina proceeded downstairs, leaving Cecily in mortal terror. It was such a terrible time to be late for luncheon. When they reached the dining-room they found no one there, and the maid informed them that Mrs. Middleton would have been down for ten minutes or so, but had sent word they were not to wait for her.

"And zee Cornel?" asked Mademoiselle. "The Colonel was engaged with two gentlemen, who would be in directly."

She felt her heart beat at the thought of seeing Mervyn's step-father; and she wondered where he would sit. She had herself Mademoiselle on one side, and Cecily's vacant place on the other. He would sit exactly opposite, so that she might have a good look at him.

The door opened, and in came the three gentlemen. Nina, with the flush which excitement always brings, was looking very handsome, and Mervyn bent her up and kissed her.

"Good morning, my little woman." "My law, this is my eldest daughter."

Nina,

this is Lord Wardlaw. Mr. Leigh—M^t ton!"

And Colonel Middleton sat down. This was all against the rules. Mr. Leigh never allowed any introductions to be made, and particularly disliked Nina being introduced in this way. With her it was, however, different. How do you do to this gentleman like the above introduction was quite in accordance with his principles. Mr. Leigh bowed as if he had been up, and made some civil remark about Mrs. Middleton would have been fine if she had been there. Colonel Middleton, however, thought it rather a good joke.

"We shall have her out and about no time," he said.

"The sooner the better," answered Mr. Leigh.

But it was all lost upon Nina. She were fixed on Lord Wardlaw, and she would remember her. She very much doubted it.

"We made friends in the

said, in the kind voice which had attracted her before, coming up and taking her hand.

Nina got very red, and shy, and didn't know what to say; but she was conscious of a feeling of pleasure when Lord Wardlaw seated himself by her side.

"Something wrong, Wardlaw!" said Colonel Fiddleton, as he saw Lord Wardlaw looking eagerly at the silver mug and diminutive knife and fork in front of him.

Now the last thing Nina wished was to drive Wardlaw away, but between shyness and truthfulness she did her best to do the very thing she did not want.

"You've got Cecily's place," she said, bluntly.

"I'm sure I beg Cecily's pardon," he said, smiling.

"What had I better do?"

"Conscience, my dear fellow, don't trouble yourself. Have the things changed."

so, to Nina's great satisfaction, the arrangement was not altered.

The way, where is Miss Cecily?" said Colonel Fiddleton.

"Late for luncheon! Lucky for her hat," I.

mamma is late too." And Colonel Middleton winked at Nina as he spoke.

But Nina did not smile. There was a loyalty in the child's nature, and a truthfulness which made anything underhand impossible to her. She knew she would not have smiled if her mother had been present, and so she was too honest to do it just because she was not there. She kept her eyes on her plate. None of this was lost upon Lord Wardlaw. Perhaps it was some qualities of this kind that had attracted him years ago to Magdalen Middleton.

At this juncture Cecily, looking shy and frightened, was seen trying to glide into the room unserved. The change in her face when she saw her mother was not there was very remarkable.

"Come here, you rogue, and give me a kiss," said Colonel Middleton; "what do you mean by being late?"

Cecily sprang to his side, delighted with her reception.

"Oh papa, it was I looking at the carriage. I quite forgot to get ready."

Middleton was rather anxious to
out before their new relation, and
y to converse.

in here, between me and Mr. Leigh, and
self."

vicinity of one of the heroes of the
o much for Cecily. She quite jumped
and exclaimed: "Oh! how very funny!
er who it was."

"We have not had long to wonder," said her
you have hardly been a minute in the

"But I was wondering before," said Ce-

body laughed.

"What do you mean?" asked Colonel Mid-

When have you seen that gentleman be-

"I was watching him while I was getting ready
for luncheon," said Cecily. "That's what made me

"In my word," said her father, "I call this
being quite romantic."

"What do you call it?" exclaimed Cecily eagerly; "that is just what I want to know."

"Come, come," said Colonel Middleton, "you must explain yourself. What do you mean?" "I mean," she said, "that I want to know what you call a carriage that is not a waggonette, nor a t-cart, nor a tandem, nor—"

"My goodness, child!" exclaimed her father, "one would think you had come straight from the mews!"

"So I have," she answered, "at least . . ." and she broke off, astonished at the laughter with which her speech was received, and dismayed at a reproachful sound which broke from Mademoiselle. Nina now roused herself to speak, for she was expecting her mother to appear every moment, and feared Cecily might get into disgrace.

"Our bed-room window looks out on the mews, papa," she said, "and I often see Mr. Leigh's, I suppose, as I sometimes see him there. There was a new kind of carriage there this morning, and Cecily has been

now what it is called. It's got one in front of the other, and we h and . . . you," she added, turn- Wardlaw, "getting out of it this morn-

at's called a harum-scarum," said Lord
hndly.

ant a clear sensible answer, I always
of Nina," said Colonel Middleton.
harum-scarum sort of creature yourself,
and it's just the sort of carriage for

I be delighted to give Miss Cecily a
ine," said Mr. Leigh.

shouldn't I like it!" exclaimed Cecily.
her hands; and her face beamed with

what?" said a very decided voice, as the
ned.

er's face clouded over with an expression
her eyes dropped, and she went on eatin
er. Colonel Middleton looked uneasy, an
turbed; for Mrs. Middleton had entered the

room. She greeted both guests with warmth, especially Lord Wardlaw, and took her seat at the head of the table.

"I feel as if I have disturbed a conversation," she said blandly; "I heard such a babel of voices as I came along."

"We were talking about harum-scarums," said Lord Wardlaw.

"I have a great dislike to that kind of foolish carriage," said Mrs. Middleton. "I always think a young man must be either very idle or very foolish who sets up anything of the kind. I shall never allow my sons to do such a thing."

There was rather an awkward silence after this speech. Mr. Leigh looked very uncomfortable; he was very young, not much more than a boy, and he dreaded Mrs. Middleton's scorn.

There was a twinkle in Lord Wardlaw's eye, and he was the first to speak.

"I am afraid, Mrs. Middleton, you will have a very poor opinion of me when I tell you I have been driving in one this morning."

Now nothing could make Mrs. Middleton think

d Wardlaw. He was in the high est
answered graciously, "It would take a
o make me alter my opinion of Lord
nd I am quite sure idleness and folly
be mentioned in connection with his
me other motive must have been at

"I only drove with a friend to prevent his neck," suggested Colonel Middleton, who blushed crimson.

Mr. Leigh, who blushed crimson.
had been struggling

Mr. Leigh, who blushed
ere Cecily, who had been struggling hard
it for some minutes, broke into such
gling that the conversation was brought
termination. Hardly believe her ex-

Middleton could hardly believe her ears, turning indignantly towards her to order her out of the room, when Lord Wardlaw inter-

"must intercede," he said. "This conversing so close upon that which preceded it, even a little too much for the child. Will you allow me to explain it to you, and, meanwhile, overlook the transgression for this time—as the first

favour I have asked on entering the
added in a lower tone; and Mrs. Middleton
gave in.

It would be hard to say whether Mr. Cecily was the most relieved by this arrangement. The former had feared Lord Wardlaw was going to declare him the owner of a harum-scarum, and Cecily had been in agonies. Nina, too, had run on thorns; but her opinion of Lord Wardlaw rose higher and higher, and as she left the dining-room she told herself that, far from being to be pitied, Mervyn was to be envied on the acquisition of such a charming a step-father.

There was a feeling of freedom all over the house that afternoon, for Mrs. Middleton and her husband went to a breakfast soon after four o'clock, and were not expected home till late at night. Extra strictness is apt to produce eye-service, and Mrs. Middleton's household was no exception to the rule. Everyone, from the governess down to the footman, children included, felt as if a weight were lifted off their minds, and began to turn over in their thoughts.

vail themselves of the opportunity
doing something different to usual.

When the cat's away
The mice do play,

ouse in the establishment thought of
ame. Mademoiselle went off to tea
, leaving the school-room under Nina's
ead nurse went to the play, deputing
s to the nurserymaid. Cecily and Ed-
tly tea was over, made an inroad into
room, and amused themselves by look-
photograph-books, &c., which were, as a
d to them; and Nina went up to the
nd carried Totty into her bed-room to
evening with her. Cecily also made
amination of all the invitations in the
ass over the chimney-piece, and tried to
how many times her father and mother
ne out that week. Meanwhile Edmund
the balcony, climbed over into the adjoin-
and peeped in at the neighbour's windows -
sound of niggers coming down the street

distracted them both, and they flew off
news to Nina and Totty.

She was sitting on the floor with
ther in her arms, talking softly to hi
him little songs; and when the other:
their news, she answered sharply th
care about niggers. For she resent
tion, and their noisy entrance had st
ous child in her lap.

The animation, however, which
pale little face at the news, made
bending her head over him, she
derly,

"Would Totty like to see them?"

"What are they like?" asked Totty.

"They are black men, darling,
and dance."

Totty shuddered.

Evidently he had not been prepared for a
ture of the entertainment.

"Must I really go?" he said, fearfully.

"Oh yes, Totty," said Edith.
they're jolly men, you know."

Meeting the appealing glance of the
s, settled it for him in a moment.
arms round him, she assured him that
nothing should make him see anything
e.

"muff," said Edmund; but fortunately
she did not hear.

and Cecily ran off again, and the brother
were left alone.

happier without them, ain't we, darling?
o on looking at the pictures."

as it got later, and he grew weary, she
is head on her shoulder and sang softly
the gathering twilight.

after song he called for, joining in some
himself, but for the most listening quietly, an
the events of the tales contained in the
old ballads with eager interest.

crowning favourite was kept to the last, an
owly and distinctly, that he might follow the

THROWN TOGETHER.

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Lord Thomas
He was
A forester bold
And hunted
The king's brown deer,
And Eleanor
She
Was a faire maiden,
And Lord Thomas
He
Loved her dear.

On and on, through the twelve or thirteen stanzas,
of which the ballad is composed.
Totty was half asleep towards the end, but
kindled into sudden enthusiasm at the thrilling con-
summation.

He cut off
His own brown wife's head,
And threw it against the wall !!
"Oh, Nina! did we really?"
This question would always come whenever the
verse was sung; and Nina, seeing the shrinking in
his eyes, would always answer,
"No, darling, not really; it's only a tale."
She had once said story; but this had so con-

falsehood in Totty's mind, and made
of how far Nina herself might be im-
intruth, that she had since substituted

"
le, darling, that's all."

a joke, Nina?"

ling, it's a kind of joke."

of a sort of a joke," he would repeat
sly; "isn't it, Nina?"

tried leaving out the verse altogether,
s discovered this and asked for it. In

fear, it fascinated him, and he would

world have allowed her to miss it.

gain," he said sleepily, just as she had

ned the end of the fourteenth verse; and

urmuring, began all over again.

s fetched to bed at seven, and then sh

joined the others on the drawing-roo

CHAPTER V.

The Hero's Home.

"HERE! Beth-Gelert. Here! halloa, old fel-low!"

The hills all around caught up the sound of the fresh young voice, and echoed it from one to the other.

"Not there! old Stupid! Here!" rang out the merry tones again, and again the hills reverberated,

"Not there! old Stupid! Here!"

And then such a ringing laugh pealed through the air, that the old hills sounded mad with joy as they took it up, and repeated it again and again.

Mervyn Lyndsay put down his books on a bit of rock, and bounded lightly up the sides of one of the hills, till he reached a spot from whence he could command a better view of the surrounding country; and there he stood, shading his eyes with his hand from the setting sun, and looking eagerly

round in search of something.

The old Welsh hills looked down admiringly

figure and the bright young face.—
the things to be seen in that secluded

the dog Beth-Gelert, who, confused
had been careering along in the open
to join his young master, and who
given up their meeting as a bad job,
at full speed towards Glen-Mervyn, the
old home.

hidden away among the trees to the left,
the chimneys could be seen, even from
a distance where Mervyn now stood. See-
ing the position of affairs, with another
, the boy bounded down the hill again,
his books, and ran at full speed towards
hoping to overtake the dog. By some
through a plantation, probably known
himself, he reached the stables in a few
where, on glancing at the stable clock,
expressed astonishment, and he increased

ing a back door, he ran through some pas-
and emerged into a large old-fashioned hall,

THROWN TOGETHER.

decorated with antlers and banners, and adorned with figures of old knights in armour. Then, pushing open a heavy oak door, he entered a long low drawing-room, and, throwing down his books and hat on the nearest table, he advanced to a bow window at the other end of the room, and ex-

claimed:

"Oh mother, darling! I'm sorry I'm so late. I hope I haven't kept you waiting for tea."

The lady whom he addressed was sitting in the bow window, with an open letter in her hand, apparently lost in thought. Her head was turned towards the window, and her eyes were wandering over the beautiful Welsh country, which stretched away beyond the gardens and pleasure-grounds. She was quite young, and probably looked even younger than she really was; too young, in fact, to be the mother of the well-grown boy who stood by her side. So deep was her absorption, that she did not even hear Mervyn's noisy entrance; and it was not till his voice sounded from her reverie, and start, and exclaimed,

, darling? how you startled me!"

unfeignedly astonished.

r! why of course it is me! Who else

e," said Mrs. Lyndsay, "I don't know,
ho else it could be; but I don't think
ng you so soon."

" echoed Mervyn; "why I am so dread-
t I thought you would be wondering
ome of me! Why, mother! do you
lf-past five?"

ssible?" said his mother; but she still
ther absently, and her eyes seemed to
esistible inclination to wander again to
mountains.

ll me, dear," she continued, as with an
hook off her reverie, and rose from her
t is it makes you so late? And, my child,
ou are!" she concluded, laying her hand
s flushed cheek.

e moved from her chair, the letter, which
lying on her lap, fell to the ground, and
n picked it up and gave it to her, he could
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together. 1.

not help seeing that she flushed slightly, hastily took it from his hand. He was a moment, but he soon forgot the passing the excitement of relating his adventures Gelert, to which his mother listened with usual interest and animation.

Magdalen Lyndsay, as the reader is aware, was a widow, and Mervyn was her only. She had married early a man many years her senior, and he had died eighteen months after, leaving sole guardian of her son and of his property. Will glance at her individual history from the time of her husband's death.

It seemed to her her duty to live herself, and bring up her boy, among his own people, and in his forefather's home; and so, in spite of the objections raised by her relations, and especially by her brother, she settled always to spend eight months of the year at Glen-Mervyn. Colonel Middleton represented to her the loneliness of such an arrangement; "buried alive" as he called it, in a solitary part of Wales, with a child who was too young to be a companion. But she resisted all his attempts to induce her to

in London, and to content herself till
she returned to Glen-Mervyn. She was not only
her, she argued, but sole manager of
all he should come of age to undertake
her husband had placed trust in her by
and she was determined to prove herself
as confidence. She promised she would
go to London for four months in the year,
all her relations would visit her at Glen-
Mervyn whenever they felt inclined; and for the rest
, she said, if she could not be contented
utiful home and plenty of occupation,
youth, and health with which to enjoy it
thought she must be a very poor creature

brother, who looked upon her as a child
could not at all see the force of this argument.
Really, Magdalen," he said, "you must
deserted if you think the estate cannot get
well without you. A better-ordered, better-
property cannot be; and surely a man
, who has lived so many years upon it, does
not require you to tell him what to do." 9*

"All very true," his sister answered; "but I have great faith in the master's eye."

"Master's eye, yes," he repeated contemptuously; "but the eye of a girl of your age is not exactly the same thing. And what on earth can you, who have lived all your life in a London street, know about managing a property?"

"You forget, Rowley, that I have been married eighteen months, and lived all that time on the very property of which you are speaking."

"Eighteen months! your experience must be vast, truly!"

"Greater than you think, perhaps," said Magdalen, as her thoughts reviewed those eighteen months of close companionship with a man, who, though old enough to be her father, had always insisted on her taking interest in his pursuits; and by this means had instilled into her mind much that she would never have dreamt of enquiring into; for which knowledge, little as it had interested her at the time, she was grateful now, since it would enable her to undertake her new duties.

"As to the dulness," she added, "I am used to

Mervyn, with her boy,
others, was to her, by
had led there, suffused
enjoyment; and that the
the old Welsh home, re-
of trying to satisfy an
be satisfied, would be
this she could not, af-
fore she broke off her
had said too much.

"I don't understand
Middleton; "nor can
voluntarily exiling him
grow morbid and un-
before your time."

His sister laughed.
"You must try to
often to stay with
Lydia must look
home, to come and
with as many children

And so the a-
be renewed again

—her life was neither empty nor dull. Useful, responsible, powerful, and respected, what more did she want? Only affection; and even that was hers; for as her boy grew on, he developed such strong affections, and such devotion to herself, that she had no longing to soothe, and no feeling unsatisfied. He showed a care and a thought for her beyond his years—a protecting kind of love which was very touching in a boy of his age.

From his earliest childhood he had been accustomed to be told—"Take care of her, Mervyn; you are all she has." "Remember, Mervyn, she has no one but you." And such admonitions had sunk into his childish heart, and brought forth abundant fruit as years went on. He seemed completely to understand his position of "the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." He was full of little cares, little attentions; wonderfully thoughtful for her, and careful of her; unselfish as a woman; obedient to her slightest wish. He had never given her pain in his life, had ever treated her with reverence, and his childish faults she had always been able to reach through his affections. Some-

where her boy's good was concerned, Magdalen never thought of herself.

Considering all this, it may well be imagined that Mervyn should be rather surprised at her not discovering he was late; at her admission that he had startled her; and at her exclamation, "Is that *you*, darling?" As if in wide Wales it could be anyone else! He thought over it as he sat in the pretty drawing-room after they had had their tea, and his mother had gone upstairs to put on her riding-habit; and his reflections were not altogether pleasant. What could she have been thinking of so earnestly when he came in? What was that letter she had in her hand, to which she did not make any allusion? Why had she seemed so anxious to recover it when it fell from her hand? Was it all connected with something he was not to know? It was so unusual to find her doing nothing—she was always occupied about something. Seldom had he seen her so abstracted. Thinking of this, it for the first time crossed his mind that she had been rather thoughtful ever since they returned to Glen-Mervyn from London, three weeks ago. Several times he remem-

over them? What misfortune *could* there be as long as they were well and together? Unless . . . The old bug-bear—school! Could his officious uncle be urging his being sent there at once, instead of waiting, as had always been decided, till next Christmas?

Mervyn was accustomed to his uncle's coming forward on every occasion to further his being sent to school, and always greatly resented it. What other misfortune could be impending, if not this?

He brooded over it, making himself quite miserable, till a sound reached his ears, which reassured him at once. It was his mother's voice from her window over-head, singing as she dressed; and the voice was so gay, so ringing, that Mervyn forgot his fears directly, and felt his spirits rise with the clear high notes of her song, till he forgot everything in the pleasure of listening to it. His mother would not sing like that if sorrow were impending. His mother would not sing like that if he were going to be taken from her.

And with a sigh of relief he lay back in an arm-chair, and ~~in~~ himself he had been frightened

cupant, since early morning, but herself. There was work on one table, books on another; the piano was open, and the leaves of a piece of music fluttered in the soft wind that blew in at the window, as if some one had lately risen from it. There were flowers in different parts of the room, arranged in a sort of natural luxuriance peculiar to a lady, to which few others can ever attain. So unlike, thought Mervyn, the stiff little rows of flowers in the vicar's "parlour," one row red, one blue, one yellow, without a leaf or a morsel of green to relieve the mass of colour. As unlike his mother's arrangement as the vicar's prim maiden sister was unlike his mother herself.

The big bow-window opened on to the garden, and there again his mother's taste was displayed in the pretty laying out of the beds, and harmony of colour. There was a pair of gardening gloves, and a watering-pot lying by one of the beds; everywhere showed signs of life and employment, though he knew for certain that no one but herself had been there all day.

A light step sounded on the oak floor outside,

CHAPTER VI.

Why Mervyn and his Mother were late for Dinner.

It was a lovely summer evening as mother and son rode off from the house. Their way lay through the wildest and most beautiful part of the property; the sun was not yet beginning to set. Conversation never flagged for a moment; questions and answers followed in quick succession. The hills echoed their merry laughter, and the sound of Mervyn's shouts to Beth-Gelert. The sun had sunk to rest some time before they turned their faces homeward. They rode slowly back to Glen-Mervyn, in the soft twilight; every now and then disturbed in their conversation to bid good-night to the passers-by in their picturesque Welsh attire, returning from their day's work; or even to rein up their horses altogether, while Mrs. Lyndsay stopped to enquire into the welfare of those more particularly known to her.

she to tell him that which she has to tell? It is now nearly a fortnight since the question first presented itself to her mind, and she has found no answer yet.

The letter received that afternoon has shown her that she must lose no time; nay, that if possible, he must be told this very night. "Oh, no," says a voice in the mother's heart; "no, not to-night; let him have one day more! He is so gay, so light-hearted this evening; his laugh is so ringing, his dear eyes so bright. No! not to-night! no, to-night! It may rain to-morrow, and he may be less gay; and when the wind sighs round the mountains, and the rain drips against the window, making him dull and listless, it will be easier for him to hear what she has to say. But to-night it is so sweet and fair; the air is so balmy, and all nature seems so gay. The birds and insects are singing and rejoicing; let him share in the gladness to-night. He must not be the one sad thing under the summer sky! Let him have one more evening in the garden with his mother all his own. . . . What a dear right face it is! The sunny

through it all once more. First, the quiet life with her father, in their London home—even, uneventful; she the only young thing there, with no companions but the two old men. Then the days when she first knew Charlie Digby. What a charm his society had brought into her life, even before love grew up in her heart, when a closer acquaintance showed him to be all that was manly and true! Then had followed the intuitive conviction that he loved her, and the contented waiting on from day to day till he should speak, while she painted the scene of the happy future she felt so certain lay before her. Then the rude shock of his sudden departure without word or sign, without farewell; the sudden conviction that she had deceived herself, and been deceived; the bitter pain of the loss of his love, mingled with the wounded pride at being forsaken. Then the cold blank of life without a future; the lack of interest in everything; the loss of faith not only in him, but in the truth, and the virtue and the manliness of which he had been to her the embodiment; the return to the dull monotonous life with old men. Then had

And Magdalen, torn from all her accustomed mornings, felt herself drifting out into a sea of darkness and doubt.

From such shipwreck as this her boy's lips on her forehead saved her; and the tears which his caresses brought to her eyes, while they dimmed her outward vision, dispelled her mental blindness, and she saw one light in the darkness, one spar to which she might cling—her child!

In the confusion of images which had bewildered her, his at least stood clear and well defined, consistent, loving, and unchanged; and whatever other duties she had mistaken or left undone, to this at least she had been faithful, and had performed it well. In all the landscape behind her, his figure was the clearest and the most familiar. Her years of motherhood extended over a space of time, compared to which her early friendship seemed a moment, and her married life a dream. The very thought of him enabled her to shake off her misty retrospection, and to return to the present moment. The dim figures fled away, and that of her boy took their place. They might seem

heart of how her news would affect him. As she thought of how completely he had had her to himself all these years, and how accustomed he had always been to look upon her as his exclusive possession, the fear increased, and she resolved to put off the announcement for the present. She had gone through so much of agitation already, she had not the strength to encounter more. So she left the morrow to take care of itself, and gave herself up unrestrainedly to the pleasure of her boy's society, and the charm of his light-heartedness and youth.

"Why should I make him sad before the time?" she asked herself; and she lay back in her chair, watching him, and listening to him, rejoicing to see him so gay. He was always full of life and spirits, but that day he had seemed even more joyful than usual. His father had been of a morbid, mopy disposition, but the boy inherited from his mother the happy quality of turning every little thing into enjoyment, and finding amusement everywhere. As he sat there, chatting and laughing, recounting little things that had happened at the Vicarage,

making itself heard. "Not to-night! not to-night!
let him have one day more!"

The worst of it was, she had not only to announce the unwelcome news, but to prepare him for an almost immediate parting with herself. On that intermediate separation, that impending parting, she could not dwell herself for a moment without a tightening at her throat, and a strange thrill at her heart. How, then, could she expect it of him.

He was to spend the time of her absence at his uncle's; but as Colonel Middleton and his family would not be settled in the country till after her marriage, Mervyn must be left under the vicar's charge for at least a week or ten days, if the vicar would consent to the arrangement. But she had not yet consulted him on the subject, for she did not like Mervyn to be the last to hear of what concerned him so much the most nearly.

All this made it very necessary that Mervyn should be soon told, and Magdalen resolved that she would not put off the announcement later than the following day. The gong sounded as she came

To his dismay he found it was guiltless of a parting, and with a sigh he resigned himself to the necessity of making one. This was always a great undertaking, and he tried and tried again to make a straight one, but to no purpose. No one could have accused him of not taking pains about it, for he dug the comb into his head with an energy for which he suffered all the evening. At last something like a successful result was obtained, and after gazing at it in the glass for some minutes with great admiration, he proceeded to put on his jacket, and to pull off his boots. Just at this moment the gong sounded. Thereupon ensued a tremendous hunt for his shoes, his flurry augmented by the consternation into which the unexpected sound had thrown him. He looked under the bed, he groped on all fours under the sofa, he made himself quite flat and forced himself under the wardrobe; he looked in all the most possible and all the most impossible places, and finally discovered they had been at his side all the time. He sprang to his feet when they were on, and made for the door. Full ⁱⁱ _{thrown together, I} against the water-jug, which he

nearing a row of boots and slippers, while another is making stealthy advances to the gown you have just thrown off, which has accidentally slipped from the bed, and a third is seen creeping out under the door, with the obvious intention of taking a turn in the passage. If, to add to your anxiety, the accident occurs in a friend's house, and you know that that friend is particular about his furniture, has lately carpeted his rooms, and perhaps occupies himself the room underneath, of which the ceiling has just been whitewashed, the situation is indeed terrible. I am not sure that in any case (speaking from the depths of a vast experience) instant flight is not the most satisfactory solution of the difficulty, leaving who may, or who will, to repair the mischief. At any rate, Mervyn came to that conclusion, after one hasty glance at the hurrying stream. And then he ran down the stairs, two steps at a time, and burst into the drawing-room, with a confused account of the circumstances which had detained him, in which soap-suds, and partings, shoes and water-jugs, were mixed in so vague a manner, that his mother would have been hopelessly bewildered, if

CHAPTER VII.

Breaking the News.

BEFORE he had time to wonder at his mother's unusual unpunctuality, she came into the room behind him; and in his eagerness to begin his story all over again, he lost sight of it. He followed her into the dining-room, talking all the way, and they sat down to dinner. The long meditation upstairs had left its traces on Magdalen Lyndsay's calm sweet face, and she was rather silent and thoughtful. But she strove to shake it off, and to enter into what her boy was saying.

Having finished his story about the water-jug, he branched off to another subject.

"Mother, you'll come and look at the cricket-match, of course."

"The cricket-match, dear; what cricket-match?"

"Why, the cricket-match, mother; the one I'm going to play in, you know—Married v. Single."

away from the crowd; and then I'll come and talk to you between my turns. You'll like to see me get a lot of runs, won't you? Promise to come!"

"I shall certainly come if . . ." She broke off suddenly. "If I am here," she was going to say, but she stopped just in time.

"When is the match?" she concluded.

"To-morrow week is the Married v. Single, and a fortnight after Glen-Mervyn plays the village club. I am in both, so you can take your choice. But I think you had better come to both. There is nothing to prevent it, you know," he added with a little laugh.

Nothing to prevent it! No! Nothing; except that by that time she would be Lord Wardlaw's wife, hundreds of miles away.

The thought smote upon her so sharply; it came so vividly before her that he would be playing his cricket-matches as usual, and that she would be far away. It brought the thought of parting so near, and the pain of it so clearly, that she hastily drank off a glass of water to hide the emotion she could not repress.

THROWN TOGETHER.

"Let us finish dinner quickly, darling," she said hurriedly, "and then we will go and sit in the garden. It is such a lovely night. In fact, I think I will leave you to finish alone, for I want to get out into the air." And she rose from her chair she spoke. Mervyn looked rather surprised at the suddenness of the arrangement.

"Why, mother! you have had no strawberries and cream, and I was going to make you such a nice mess."

"I don't want any to-night, dear," she answered faintly, as she gained the door; but by irresistible impulse she returned to his side, and her arms round his neck.

"God bless you, my darling! my darling!" whispered, as she kissed him.

"I shan't be long, mother, dear," he said, with returning her caresses; and before the door closed behind her, he was absorbed in his berry mess. He followed her in about ten minutes, and found her sitting outside the window in twilight, on a low garden-chair. At her request he fetched her a white shawl, and after putting

fined to Glen-Mervyn and London. But he did not damp the outpourings of his fee. pointing this out.

"It is quite right, darling, that you shou your home, and I am glad you do. We have in it so many years now, you and I."

"So many years," repeated Mervyn, "ever I was born, mother, haven't we—you and I?"

And he repeated the words "you and I" wit sense of fond proud appropriation, while he tighter his grasp on his mother's hand.

"And I should like to go on living here for eve mother," he burst out again after a few minutes silence; "just you and I, only you and I."

And he repeated "you and I" in the same tone as before.

"You will talk differently in a few years, Mervyn," she answered, with a laugh which was half a sigh.

"Never, mother," he returned with all the positive confidence of youth, which, feeling itself so warm and faithful, cannot grasp the idea of change.

with some excitement, but checked herself each time.

"You and I for instance, mother; we do not change."

"And do you really think, Mervyn, that you are not changed, from the little tottering thing, with long hair and blue shoes, that used to patter about on this terrace, and ride on Beth-Gelert's back. I pity Beth-Gelert, if you take to such horsemanship now," she added, laughing.

Mervyn laughed too, though he was rather bored.

"I forgot," he said.

He knew by experience what it was for his mother's sense of humour to be tickled; and it hurt his dignity to see he had made himself ridiculous.

"I beg your pardon, dear," she said, still laughing; "but the idea of your not having changed since you were a baby amused me so. But I promise to be very grave now."

"Well, mother," he said eagerly, returning to his point, "it is only while one is growing that there are such great changes. Now *you*, at any rate, have

her eyes shone with a look which was half sad, half agitated.

Mervyn noticed it this time; he drew near and kissed her, whispering, "I forgot." For he thought she was thinking of his dead father.

She returned his caresses fondly, but she did not speak; and he meanwhile, with his hand locked in hers, was going through a certain train of thought, which always came upon him when the subject of that father was—which it was very rarely—mentioned between them. He hardly dared confess even to himself how much he disliked his mother having a past with which he had nothing to do, and how much he inwardly rejoiced that she was all his own, and that there was no father to come in between them. Even to her he had never hinted at this, and she had no idea of it. It was a curious part of the boy's affection that his greatest pleasure in it was that sense of monopoly, that feeling of appropriation. It was the reflection that no one but himself had the right to her which made him so happy in her possession.

changes being possible as you do now. they came, Mervyn; yet they came! Then she added dreamily, "there *is* a land where cannot come; but it is not here, Mervyn here!"

"But, mother," urged the boy, "why do you so? You frighten me; for you talk as if a change were coming. Why do you?"

"Because, my darling, a change *is* coming, and I want to prepare you for it. I had not meant to speak of it to-night; but as our talk has taken this turn, the way seems paved for me to tell you of that which is coming into our lives, and which I humbly trust will bring happiness to us both."

"What is it, mother?" said Mervyn, in a very low voice.

"In the old days, dear, of which I have been speaking, I remember two old men, who had been friends from their earliest boyhood. The one was rich and unmarried; the other poor, a widower, with a grown-up daughter and a married son. They lived in London. The rich friend, out of his abundance, was always showering his gift on the poor

side for change of air, and they almost immed left town. The young girl missed her compa sorely, and felt a little hurt that he had not c to wish her good-bye; when, on questioning father, she found Charlie Digby had obtained appointment for which he had been waiting, was now on his way to Madrid. However, sudden and dangerous illness of her father put other thoughts out of her head. He died; and the girl found herself, a few weeks after leaving London, alone, penniless, and dependent on her mar ried brother with his large family. Pitying, no doubt, her friendless condition, her father's friend asked her whether she could bear the disparity of years between them, and become his wife. She consented, and for eighteen months he made her a kind and indulgent husband. Then he died. Mean while years rolled on. By the successive deaths of his father and brothers, Charlie Digby succeeded to the family honours, and returned to England. He met once more the friend of his youth; the old intimacy was renewed; the old delight in each other's society revived, and he asked her to become

THROWN TOGETHER.

revived the old feelings in Magdalén's breast, the next words were spoken dreamily—more to herself than to the boy.

"By the recollection of the long, long years separation, he urged her not to refuse him; by loneliness and exile in a foreign land, he prædicated to make him happy now; and—she consented, not broken. Mervyn remained sitting where he was, with his head against her knees, and he neither spoke nor moved.

Mrs. Lyndsay, knowing his impetuous, excitable nature, marvelled to find him take the new quiet. She wondered what was passing through his mind, and longed to take one look at his face in the position in which he was sitting it was from her, and she felt it was better not to him, or to force him to speak too soon.

She knew some time must be allowed for the shock of a piece of utterly unexpected intelligence, but she had not expected that Mervyn would be able to restrain for so long expression of his kind, accustomed as he was to pour forth

small and petty; and she had always
the grand broad lines of Mervyn's character,
because simple, broad because so
selfish.

And now she began to think with pride and
hope that he was not going to disappoint her; that
he was above all these little feelings; that the frank,
generous nature she had always so delighted in was
coming to his help now, and that he would stand
the test. Nay, more; that there was nothing selfish
in his fond, proud appropriation of herself, but that
in his loving devotion there were depths which even
she had not fathomed or suspected; and as she
thought of it, her love and admiration deepened.

But she began to wish he would speak. This
pent-up reserve was not natural to him, and at last
she felt she must hear what his feelings were. So,
laying her hand caressingly on his hair, she tried to
turn his hidden face towards herself, saying in a
fond, low tone, in which all her love and all her
admiration seemed to express itself:

"Speak to me, my darling."

And then the burst came, with such passionate

them which was flashing from both of his. But
only for a moment. It faded away directly, and
gave place to a mournful, pitying light, which melted
the boy at once, and caused him to throw himself
at her knees, and exclaim in a less passionate, more
despairing tone,

"Oh mother, say you do not mean it; say it is
all a mistake."

"I cannot say so, Mervyn."

The low, sweet voice so dearly loved, thrilled
through the boy, and woke up his love with greater
force than ever; woke up, too, the feeling of blind
resentment, which her loving look had melted; and
he ground his teeth together in his effort to keep
back the torrent of words which rose to his lips,
but which, in spite of himself, escaped almost before
he was aware.

"You shall not do it! I won't have it! I hate
him!"

"Mervyn!"

Frightened into silence by the stern indignant
tone, so unlike what he was accustomed to hear

thought of it deprived him of voice where express one.

His mother saw how it was. "Never dear," she said with a sigh, "leave it for sent; we will talk of it some other time. to say, of your part in it. Now we will mine."

This was her last resource; an appeal feelings for her sake; and it succeeded dire it made Mervyn feel as if he had been and he drew closer to her, and listened with might.

"Let me go back to what I was saying. your going to school. Well! I do not sh happy knack of putting that out of my h has been constantly present to me for many past, and the thought of how dull and lone be without you has made me feel very sa it is only the beginning of the end, you kn the beginning of the end."

"How do you mean, mother?" asked th "Ah, Mervyn, I am braver than you, fo faced the future and told myself that a r

yourself. And you must try and see that, t would not have it otherwise, the pondering things has made me feel that my life he will not be so filled up and satisfying a hitherto been. And so . . . ”

She broke off with a smile, and her ey dered away again to the silvery moon.

“And so? . . . ” questioned Mervyn, “ mother?”

“So God, in His great love and g Mervyn, has sent back to me the friend youth, to bring a new interest into the life going to be so lonely, and to be to me panion and protector which you, my boy, a distance be. And you, Mervyn, if you me is as real and unsselfish as I have al lieved it to be, far from regretting, shoul that you do not leave me desolate and un should be grateful to this friend who will g cherish me in your absence, and keep i till you can return to me again. Wha regret in it, Mervyn? Why should it make Why! Mervyn was unable to find a

That night, kneeling before the throne of Magdalen Lyndsay poured forth her thanl that at least *one* work of her life should n been in vain, and that the love and care should have received this palpable reward.

She had well nigh despaired several ti ring that long and stormy interview. Fear, duty, the habit of obedience and deference will, the faith in her wisdom and judgn none of these usually powerful agents had been anyway moved or swayed for a minut

But love had been stronger than fear, than habit, stronger than faith even. It touched the right chord at last, and silence once all jars in his heart. Nothing else wo won him—nothing!

Her years of devotion had not been after all. The foundation of her power s tain, being rooted in love. She did not future now as she had feared it once or t ring their long conversation. She felt that her boy had faced the struggle of their li

CHAPTER VIII.

The Middleton Family move.

In the course of a week after their wa
their father, the little Middletons had it
announced to them that their aunt Magda
going to be married to Lord Wardlaw in
fortnight, and that their cousin Mervyn was
to stay with them at Granton during his
absence abroad.

"Nina is certainly a most unsatisfactory
said Mrs. Middleton to her husband, wher
turned to the drawing-room after making
nouncement. "She showed no interest, e
no surprise. One would almost have thou
her manner that she knew all about it befo:

It is certainly wonderful how much i
practice of children to put "two and two t
of the scraps they hear, and so get at
Their parents are, for the most part, as un

holiday in the months of August, Septemb October. She went to Paris to study part time, and for the sake of that prospective tage for her daughters Mrs. Middleton allo longer leave of absence than is the usual. She felt she returned more and more q after every holiday, to make her pupils French scholars. In the meantime they had French lady to superintend the school-roo had been Mrs. Middleton's own governess a time. This lady, though in mortal terror Middleton, and a perfect slave to her rul not, in herself, a very rigid disciplinari therefore Nina was glad that Mervyn's visi be paid under her reign.

The children were to leave London in week; and their parents were to remain be the wedding; but Mervyn was not to come whole family were settled at Granton. thoughts were very busy all that day map the future, and wondering if Mervyn w happy. She was so abstracted during the the afternoon, that Cecily could get nothin

by just holding up his
sant to see the pranc
nothing would stop
have the power, by
forcing the grand c
their haunches, whe

"How funny!"
bit about that. A
either."

"How do you
asked Nina.

"I asked him
he said he sho
first thought of
dilly, for all the
He said he ne
seeing them al

Nina did
was musing o
cousin's wish
own was a
She wonder
nicer feeling

The accident had the effect of producing a head official of great importance, who, while congratulating the lady on having escaped without injury, hastened to reassure her by pointing out that she would be certain to feel the effects more hereafter. He proceeded to observe, with solemn gravity, that he looked upon the misadventure as great compliment to the railway-carriage. It was not often that the windows were clean enough admit of such a mistake being made. He then bowed himself off, and the train proceeded on way.

His remarks had left the lady in question doubt as to the amount of disfigurement inflicted on her face; and she did not feel sufficiently intimate with any of her fellow-passengers (much the accident had drawn them together for a brief moments) to invite them to inspect her countenance. It seemed hard that she should be the only person to remain in ignorance of what concerned her so much the most nearly, but the fact remained, that she could not steal a glance at her own face, while all the others were at liberty

Cecily's grammar, combined with her sudden interest in politics, put the finishing touch to the poor lady's distress of mind. She raised ~~her~~ ^{the} eyes with an appealing glance towards the child, and then saw, for the first time, that the little girl was not speaking to her. Realising ~~the~~ mistake she had made, and fearful of having betrayed herself, and of attracting the notice she sought to avoid, she shrank back into her seat, and never looked up again during the whole of the journey.

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On her own side, she could not but tell herself that it was a very serious step that she was taking; that she was going from a certain happiness—happiness that she had tried and proved—into the unknown.

On his, though she knew that eventually it would be for his own personal happiness, that the man who was to fill a father's place to him was all men the one he would love and honour most yet she felt there would be much for him to be in the meanwhile.

It was not *that* future that she feared for him so much as that nearer one of the long months without her spent in the colder atmosphere of cousins' home; the pain of every hour brought nearer the parting itself, which came upon them all too quickly.

"Mervyn," she said at breakfast, "your uncle to be here at seven. I think I will walk with you as far as the gate at half-past six, and then return to meet him alone."

That was all that passed between them on the subject. All the day long she talked of his do-

Glad to see him smile, she went on. "Will you try and find out what Nina is like, and write and tell me, for I am curious to know?"

"Yes," he answered eagerly, and then he went on to speak of the other cousins, and to wonder if all the elder boys would be at home. And so they talked on quite cheerfully till half-past five, and then she said, "We must go."

They walked along, sometimes silent, sometimes conversing quietly, till they came to the gate. And there, among the wild Welsh mountains, in the glorious summer sunset, the mother and son parted; —God having left them long enough together to fit them for the work He would have them do; and now having other paths for them to walk in, wherein to serve Him.

"God bless you, my darling, my darling, and have you in His safe keeping for ever!"

She thought she could have controlled herself, but she felt her courage going, and her voice shook and faltered as she spoke.

So she determined to cut the parting short, much

parting a whit more painful to him. The quiver in her voice would betray her; she must not attempt to speak again. So she broke off suddenly; strained him to her, hiding her face on his shoulder; kissed his eyes, his lips, his hair; took his hands, and held them as if she could not let them go; gently disengaged herself from his clinging embrace, and stepped back into the wood, leaving him standing watching her disappear among its leafy boughs, turning round once that he might see her bright and smiling, waving him on, and kissing her hand.

Smiling and bright to the last. Such was the picture he carried with him, as he turned away, feeling quite brave and cheerful, and confident that she felt the same. He vaulted over the gate, and took his way to the Vicarage.

Something rushed past him as he walked, turned, and bounded upon him. "Here, Beth-Gelert! here! Hallo, old fellow!" and Mervyn set off running, his thoughts diverted, child-like, by the sight of his favourite. And soon the echoes are ringing and themselves to their new abode.

departed: through the deserted gardens and the silent drawing-room, up the still old staircase to her own apartment, where she may give way to her grief undisturbed. Yet, though not looking to the right hand or to the left, she has been conscious of the cricket-bat on the lawn, the butterfly-net on the hall-table, the half-open door of the empty bedroom, and the chill at her heart as greater than even when she reaches her chamber door.

Entering hastily, half-blinded by her tears, she throws herself on her knees by the bed-side; there, at last, she is mastered by the grief that has been fighting with her all day. For his sake she kept it down, for his sake she has striven to be that he might not be sadden by the remembrance of her grief. But now the pain at his eye is no longer her, the strain is over, and her slight figure is shaken by the great sobs she cannot keep down.

"Oh my boy! my boy! How shall I live without you!"

So must it ever be. "The parent's love for the child," says a writer of the present century, "must ever be greater than the child's love for the parent;

CHAPTER X.

The Vicar and his Maiden Sister.

IN the prim little parlour of the Vicarage was seated its prim mistress, the vicar's maiden sister.

She was knitting by the window, and her brother, the Rev. Pendarvis H——ghes, was sitting in an arm-chair reading the paper.

It was evident that both were expecting someone; for the sister looked up at every sound, even the brother roused himself once or twice from his reading.

"You have got everything nice for him in bed-room, Gwen?"

"Yes, everything, Pen; quite a picture: a little bit of scented soap, clean curtains, a beautiful ornament in the fireplace, which I made myself and I have moved the case of stuffed birds from the library in there. I thought it would amuse him poor little fellow. Don't you think so?"

But the vicar had some time since become en-

Poor thing! she was entirely devoid of tact; but she had a wonderful aptitude for saying the right thing. She loved and admired her brother, but was a little afraid of him. She looked upon him as a very superior being, and was quite aware of her own inferiority.

"He does not think much of women," she would tell her friends, mysteriously. But there was one woman in the world, in whom the rector believed implicitly, one in whom he saw no fault or flaw whatever; one, who in his eyes, possessed all the womanly virtues without womanly weaknesses; a woman that was Magdalen Lyndsay.

Ever since she had been brought, years ago, to the notice of Glen-Mervyn to be the companion of a man many years her senior, he had esteemed and admired her. He was the only person in the world who had really known anything of her married life, and without asking any questions he had guessed at her early history. That is, he had always been convinced that his patron, Mr. Lyndsay, had been the object of her affections; and, realising this, he had admired more than he could say.

preciated it even more after Mervyn had been his pupil for a few months. He found the boy so intelligent and so eager over his work, that it was a pleasure to teach him. It was quite a new interest in the vicar's life, and he soon began to look forward to the arrival of the boy as to one of the greatest pleasures in the day. The contact with the fresh enquiring mind made him young again, and he grew to love the bright face and sunny smile as if the boy had been his own son.

When Mrs. Lyndsay imparted to him her intended marriage, and her difficulties about Mervyn, he willingly undertook to house him for a long as his mother wished, and ever since he has continually thinking what he could do to make him happy. He was a little nervous at the first feeling deeply for the boy under his present circumstances, and knowing what a wrench there would be.

As he sat reading the paper that day he reverted to it over and over again, and the thoughts were full.

"Do you think he will bring many boxes?"

"I really cannot say."

"Will Mrs. Lyndsay bring him?"

"I should say probably not."

"Poor dear! think of her going to be a bride and having a nice young husband. Will it be a grand wedding, Pen?"

Very wearily he answered, "I do not know."

"When does she go up to London, Pen, dear?"

"To-morrow."

"Colonel Middleton comes to fetch her, does he, Pen? I heard he was expected; isn't he? Pen, dear, I hear Lord Wardlaw is in Ireland, and goes to London to meet her in a few days. Does he?"

"I believe so."

"Oh, Pen, dear! how I should like to go to the wedding! Shouldn't you?"

Discouraged by his silence, she stopped; burst out again in a moment.

"Pen, there is a carriage going along the road, one of the Glen carriages. Oh, it is Col-

CHAPTER XI.

Gwen and her Victim.

SUCH was the family into which Mervyn's lot was to be cast till Colonel and Mrs. Middleton were ready to receive him at Granton.

It was not altogether a bad half-way house. The atmosphere into which he was to be translated at his uncle's was, as we know, such a very different one to that to which he was accustomed, that it was letting him down gradually not to plunge him into it at once. At the Vicarage, at any rate, he met with every care and attention that thoughtful consideration could devise. Gwen cared for all his creature comforts, and the vicar did all in his power to amuse and distract him, and make up to him for the loss of his mother's companionship. For the first few days Mervyn got on pretty well. It was quite natural to him to spend the greater part of his day there; he had done so for several

opportunity of a few minutes' private conversation with him. In the presence of her brother she dared not revert to such trivial subjects. Besides whenever she alluded in the most distant manner to any of Mrs. Lyndsay's concerns, he had taken to give her glances before which she quailed.

On the fourth day of Mervyn's stay, he received his first letter from his mother. It was written from Colonel Middleton's house in London, and announced her safe arrival there. It did contain much beyond expressions of her longing to hear from him, and to know all that he was doing.

It was given to him at breakfast, and he was conscious of Gwen's eyes being fixed on it greedily the whole time he was reading it.

The moment he had finished it, she said eagerly, "Well?"

"Quite well, thank you," said Mervyn, mistaking her question.

"Yes, but what news, dear? What does she say about Lord Wardlaw?"

days' events to tell her of! **Three days!** actually as long as that since he had seen or : to her. So he took a large sheet of paper began at the very top, feeling as if he should have room for all he had got to say. But he found writing a very different thing to talk. The turning of the sentences, the spelling of words, the time it took him, and the trouble it —all this rather cramped the free expression of feelings, and the vicar came in to say the postman was going before he had written a page and half. He was obliged to let it go as it was, and the whole transaction left on him a vague sense of disappointment. He had not thought it would have been so difficult to write to his mother. He had not said half he meant to say. He had not answered half her questions. He did not feel as if he had been talking to her at all. It depressed him, and made him sad all day. He could not shake off the feeling. He half thought of writing another letter, so as to send a good long one the next day; but as soon as his lessons were over, there came cricket, and then supper, and then

she was going to cross the same day and to tr
on to Vienna, via Amiens and Paris.

She told him that if he answered her letter
day he received it, she would find it waiting
her. The letter ended by saying Colonel Middle
ton would write to the vicar as soon as he and M
iddleton were settled at Granton. Mervyn look
very grave after reading this letter, and ate his bre
fast in silence.

"Mr. Hughes," he said after a time, "will yo
give me some foreign paper?"

"Yes, my boy. Why?"

"Mother wants to find a letter waiting from i
in Paris," he said, with an evident effort, "and s
says I must write it to-day."

"Why, good gracious!" exclaimed Gwen, "to-d
is the wedding-day!"

Before any answer could be made, the ma
servant came in to say a poor boy had called
beg the vicar to go without delay to his father, w
was dying and wished to see him. Mr. Hug
rose directly.

"It is many miles away, Mervyn," he said,

"Penny stamps would do," said Mervyn, "if I knew how many to put on."

"Now was there ever such a piece of luck!" exclaimed Gwen. "Your dear mother gave me a little gilt weighing-machine as a parting gift. She little thought the first use I should put it to would be to weigh your letter to her on her wedding-day!"

Mervyn winced. "Where is it?" he said. "On the writing-table?"

"Dear me, no!" said Gwen; "do you think I would let such a gift as that lie about on the tables to get dusty? No, it is nicely wrapped up in its box, just as she gave it to me, upstairs in my drawer. Give me the letter, dear, and I'll go up and weigh it."

Mervyn handed her the letter, and she got up from her chair. When she got to the door, she glanced at the direction, and then looked at Mervyn, with a twinkle in her eye. He felt irritated, without knowing why.

"What is the matter?" he said.

get the weighing-machine. What a joke, isn't it? And with a little chuckle of delight, Gwen tripped out of the room.

Surely next to being devoid of feeling, there is nothing worse than being devoid of tact. All as much pain can be inflicted by the want of one as by the want of the other. No refinement of cruelty could have done more than those few words of the unconscious Gwen's. The boy's feelings had been strung to the highest pitch; the embers that were smouldering in his heart needed only a very little gust of wind to fan them into a flame. He stood literally quivering under her speech, and when the door closed he gasped with the effort he made to control himself. For he felt there must be no display, no betrayal of himself. Gwen would be back again in a minute, and to save himself from her, to hope to escape from the still greater trial of her sympathy and condolences, he must at least appear unmoved.

It was a new lesson the poor child was learning —he who had never had occasion to hide his feelings before. But the contact with new characters

done with him yet. She had at last got her victim into her clutches, and she was going to make the most of her opportunity. Question upon question, surmise upon surmise, she showered upon the boy; all, in fact, that the vicar had so strenuously endeavoured to guard him from, now fell upon him.

But there are limits to human endurance, and Mervyn at length felt he could bear no more. Faltering some excuse about getting the stamps, he hastily snatched up his letter, and made for the door. Nor did he take any notice of the shrill little remonstrances that reached him as he left the room. His courage was all gone, his self-control had deserted him.

He hastily entered the little study, and locking the door after him, tore the letter up into shreds, flung them furiously into the fireplace, and then buried his head in his hands, and cried as if his heart would break.

"By the time it gets to Paris no one will know who Mrs. Lyndsay is, for there will be such person in the world!"

"No such person in the world!" No Magdalen Lyndsay! In fact, no mother! She was his no longer! Seas rolled between them. She shared no longer his home or his name. She was gone forever: she was as good as dead! She might as well be lying in the little churchyard at Glen-Mervyn. Better! oh, far better! For then she would at least be near him, still belong to him; still bear upon her tombstone the old familiar name!

With eyes blinded by their tears, he drew from his pocket her letter received that morning, that he might gaze upon the name once more. But it was not there.

"Now and always, my darling," the letter ended, "your own loving Mother." And his feelings underwent a change. "Now and always," he sobbed; "now and always."

Oh yes! she was his mother still; his own, and no one else's. He read the letter through. He drank in the living love which breathed through every line of it, and the thought of the marble tombstone fled away. Under any name, and in

it! Why, dear me! dear me! the postboy has been gone nearly three-quarters of an hour!" . . .

Five minutes more saw Mervyn rushing wildly towards the stables, and Gwen trotting as quick as she could after him, talking all the way. Her shrill little remonstrances and shriller assurances that it was no use trying to overtake the postboy fell on ears wilfully deaf and heedless.

The boy's mind was filled by only one thought. The letter *must* go. Somehow or other it must be managed. Arrived at the stable he began to saddle his pony himself; and had nearly finished before the panting Gwen came up to him.

"It's . . . no . . . use . . . dear . . . I'm . . . sure," she said, in little gasps; "he . . . must be nearly . . . there . . . by now."

"He goes by the high road," answered Mervyn, his mind intent on the straps and buckles. "If I go across country, I must get up to him."

Gwen reiterated her assurances that it would be of no avail, and that he would be sure just to miss the boy on the road.

"Look here!" said Mervyn, "I
has missed the post. How can I
It is a letter to mother, you see,
know *what* I shall do if it do
servants worshipped Mervyn an
were ready to work to the bo
man entered at once into the
case, and saw no difficulties an
did not leave the town for half
postboy's arrival, as the letters h
good horse would do it in a
There was just time to saddle
Nothing could be easier.

"On then; do it at once," sai
mother's horse; he is by far the
off as soon as you can!" No
done. In a few minutes Mervy
tion of seeing the man depart,
letter in the pocket of his saddl
long sigh of relief. "She will ge
out loud. "She won't have to a
Paris, and find none. Oh how
the tears came into his eyes."

loathsome, detestable! He wished out of its very neighbourhood; hind, and to get away from the such dreariness and desolation.

stables, mounted his pony, and the Vicarage. Change of thought, for the vicar had returned happily, for the vicar had returned had expected, and the afternoon But the recollection of that day weighed upon his spirits, and he go to Granton.

He painted to himself the de house so full of young people; the big school-room party, the son and his aunt. The little Vicara drawing-room and its uneventful youth and spirits about the vicar began to weary and depress him, was great when at last the summon

The vicar was going to London they would travel thus far together, vyn would go on alone. The thoughts were delightful.

CHAPTER

Mervyn's Arrival at

IT was about half-past six when Mervyn reached home. He hurried up to the door of Granton House with a mixture of eager excitement, half expectation and disappointment. His mother and cousins assembled in the hall, but no one there, and he was ushered into an empty drawing-room and left alone. He was very much inclined to run out into the garden, but his intention was frustrated by his aunt.

"Ah, Mervyn, here you are again. I hope you are quite well."

Mervyn ran joyfully up to his aunt and kissed her warmly. "I'm so glad to see you again," he said.

She then asked him a few questions about his journey, &c., what lesson-book he had been reading, and how far advanced he was in his studies of learning.

many stairs and along many distant school-room. "So I and Cecily. They have got their governess at present course? I am sorry to say English too much, and the to do the same. I hope yo example."

So saying, she turned voices were at last heard; door, she entered, and said brought my nephew. Mervy

Sitting at tea at a round and Edmund, and a very looked up when Mervyn entered of pleasure; and Cecily jumped run to meet him, but seemed glances timidly at her mother.

Mervyn ran up to Madam and then kissed his cousins. It is a long time since I have said. "Nina has grown very she? and Edmund looks to me

"Oh, sit by me," said little Mervyn good-naturedly putting them; after which the child another, and no one spoke. accustomed to the society of children, knew what to say.

Besides, he was very busy looking for some time at Nelly's likeness of which his mother had been ruffled by her mother's expression of her face only opinion of wherein the difference lay.

His thoughts wandered on his face, though his eye still rested on Nelly.

"How you stare!" said she. "Do you look at me?"

"Oh, I wasn't thinking about a child's candour."

"What were you thinking, Cecily?"

"Mother," he answered. Tears came into his eyes. Nelly

He felt more than repaid for :
him, as he read and re-read
He could not go back to th
He wanted to think it over,
self. So he undressed and go

He woke the next mor
pleased at the idea of being
clined to be quite happy.
school-room party; it seemed
to him; and he was so merry
made them all laugh. He wo
at once by his attentions to h
addressing his remarks to he
his cousins did not include he
as much as they might.

As soon as breakfast wa
going out.

“Out!” said Cecily, with
could. We’ve got to do less^{on}

“What shall you do, Merv
afraid you’ll be rather dull.”

“What does Aunt Lydia
he asked.

"Oh, if she's busy," he answered by myself, but I must just run off. Good-bye for the present. I'll think you've done your lessons."

whistling.

Nina looked very thoughtful afterwards. She could not bear the thought buffed, particularly on his first visit. And yet she feared much that his manner would not but be very different to that which she had been used to expect, and to what he had been.

She waited some time, listening for the sound of his returning. He did not come. She was relieved, feeling that he must have found his old school-room. She drew her curtains, and began to write in her little window, and began to write in her garden; but the least sound in the garden made her jump up and look out, for she wanted to know what he could be about.

Meanwhile, Mervyn, not finding his drawing-room, pursued his investigations.

callous to his good looks and plea
of countenance. The room, which
be rather dull and silent just now,
brightened by his presence; and she
herself not only listening, but join
versation, to the neglect of her busi
so sure that she would be glad
took it so much as a matter of cou
be there, that she began to loo
same light herself.

"Ain't you rather dull, Aunt J
Mrs. Middleton, on having th
home to her, owned that she was

"I suppose you are always
Nina and Cecily are at their les
to be while I was at the Vicara
to leave her then, you know.
being alone if she had plenty to
ally had that. But still she
hours sometimes for my lesson
me to come home. I dare say
hours for Nina and Cecily's
don't you, aunt Lydia?"

"Aunt Lydia, I've brought
a beauty? Look!"

Mrs. Middleton looked
whether she admired most the
rose he was holding out, or
above it, smiling down upon
very graciously.

"Do you know, Aunt Lydia,
to come out for a little run.
delicious it is. We might
gather."

Mrs. Middleton looked
and then at the sunny garden.
"I've half a mind to go
dull after London, and I've
do."

"Oh yes, do," said Mervy
fetch your things, if you like.
Before she could answer,

ten minutes returned with all
his arm in a heap.

"I've been rather long,"
them down on the nearest

till she took that walk with her you was all she could do to satisfy his boy's knowledge and accuracy surprised every moment she feared exposing His interest in the subject, and acquaintance matters of detail, seemed to her quite exacting; and instead of giving instruction, she found it difficult receiving it.

He had suggestions to make here and there, and all his remarks were sensible and to the purpose. He seemed to know the name and history of every flower that blossomed, and of every shrub and tree that he saw. It was just the same when they came to the factory and inspected the machinery; and he entered into conversation with the man who showed it to him with the ease of one who quite knew what he was talking about.

Mervyn presently asked to see a certain failing machine lately invented, which he seemed to take as a matter of course should be there. The man shook his head.

"We have not got one, ~~sir~~."

this. She was thinking of her now nearly sixteen, thought of and amusement, and had never thing connected with the man. She felt quite certain he had the knowledge possessed by f She began to wonder whoseness? Tutors? Whose? course. An easy-going, in thing in him. Evidently Mer kind of boy.

"I wonder why my boys asked herself.

And yet somethin' grated rather uncomfortably on

"Mother says she those sort of things," always to

"I'm sure no boy of mine cared to hear about such things."

"Qui s'excuse, s'accuse," said

"I can't remember," said the

Nina from the school-room wind
est astonishment. First, at seein
for a walk with Mervyn, and to l
as they went along, as if on th
friendly terms; then at the leng
elapsed before their voices return
the window again; and last, th
seeing Mervyn climb the tree, an
Mrs. Middleton, laughing and s
completely at his ease with her.
her mother anxiously, fearing Me
far, and that he would receive a
hardly believe her eyes when she
ton nod and smile to the top of
go in-doors without so much as a

The little daughter at the sc
began to puzzle out the very pr
was working out in the drawing-
was it? Why was this boy so
fault was it that others were not

Curiously enough, they both
conclusion. It was Mervyn him
charming, and of such an eng

this operation took him a good
he had intended; it proved so ve-

When he returned to the school
lessons over, and his cousins g
half-hour's air and exercise in
pursued Madame into her room,
radish. He found her busy was
and, his hand being in, he instant
join her in so interesting an o
done with an amount of energy t
brushes were wholly unaccustom
farther won the old lady's heart
about the room, and asking a
questions as to the history of each
photograph adorned Madame's w
their circumstances, their habits an
enquired into with an interest wh
and made her quite loquacious.

The luncheon-bell rang, an
ready for luncheon.

"Please go and get ready, M
adding shyly, "We are very p
mamma comes in directly the bel

to have so many to be with must find it so difficult to see day. Mother has **only** got me have got Nina and Cecily, and and Baby. Oh! and Willie, and Albert, when they **are** at home. rather difficult?"

Mrs. Middleton, in the *past*, answered that a **large family** was convenient in more ways than one.

"What are we going to do with us?" asked Mervyn **presently**.

"What would you like to do, Middleton."

"Ride, I think," he **answered**. You know. Will you ride with

Nina, with her eyes fixed unmoved something unintelligible.

The difference between her **sharp** struck Mrs. Middleton forcibly provoked with her.

"Why cannot you answer **sharp** sharply, "instead of looking as

The boy's gratitude and relief
thanked her warmly.

"But what will you do, Aunt,
be all alone. Shan't you be dull?"

"I am going to drive to the
station," she answered, "to meet some people who have
arrived."

"Then I suppose I shan't see you
come back," he said, as they reached
the table; "so good-bye till then."

Mrs. Middleton gave her a kiss.

Mrs. Middleton said nothing
odd as she returned it. Whether she was
pleased, it was impossible to tell.
She returned to the drawing-room
and sat down on the sofa;—and thought.

Mervyn came down ten minutes later
from his ride, and found the ponies at
the door, and Nina in her habit.

"Is he coming too?" he asked
of the coachman.

Nina nodded. Mervyn looked
surprised.
"You must lead the way," he
started, "because you will know where to go."

"So it is. But it is better
Madame and Cecily."

"Mother and I have such—
the boy after a pause. "We ~~were~~
way along, and . . . oh, ~~both~~
half involuntarily, as the ~~reco~~
him, and he turned his head ~~awa~~
that rushed to his eyes.

Nina looked pityingly at ~~his~~
longed to say something to ~~comfor~~

Her feelings must have been
eyes; for when Mervyn met the ~~bl~~
"You are like mother, I dec
were, and I said . . . Oh! I
you what I said."

"Oh yes, do!" said Nina.

"You would not like it, you ~~k~~

"I assure you I should not mi

She was pleased and interes
she turned to Mervyn was a very

"What a pity it is you ~~e~~
like that! . . . and then ~~I~~
said it!"

"Oh, that was all!" he answered a gallop."

It was ten minutes or so before they were walking again; and then Mervyn said, "It is a pity, isn't it?"

"What is a pity?"

"Why, that you always look .

"I don't!" flashed out Nina.

"Oh, but you do, Nina. You know, because you don't see yourself to say that you always do, but now at luncheon to-day, oh dear, you looked!"

"You don't understand," said lessly in her saddle. "I wasn't quite that."

"What then?" asked Mervyn.

Nina hesitated. She looked pale, and felt she would never stand what reserve meant, nor the complications of pride and .

"It is no use, Mervyn; you must stand."

"It seems to me such a trouble for
so much what people say."

"It's not so much **what they**
"as what they might *think.*"

"Think what?"

"Oh, all sorts of **things.**"

"What *does* it matter **what pec-**

Nina had no **answer to make**
idea, and the cousins **rode on in**

"Who do you love **most in t-**
was Mervyn's next speech.

Nina was not at all **prepared fo-**

"Who do you?" she said hasti-

"Mother, of course," he **answe-**
should I love best? I only asked
have a father too, and I thought y
favourite between them."

Perhaps at any other time N
had more discrimination; but, bei
corner by her fear of Mervyn's /
question, she spoke without reflecti:

"You have got a father too,
"Lord Wardlaw is your father."

"Mrs. Middleton will be in sir, I think," the servant added.

Up to her dressing-room v steps at a time, and knocked at

"Come in," said his aunt's

"I've come to have a little advancing into the room, an the end of the sofa, on which lying. "Are you tired, Aunt you some tea?"

Mrs. Middleton was surprise still more so at the boldness trated into her sanctum; but him away.

"I have had some tea, th

"You don't look very co Your head is so low. W pillow?"

Mrs. Middleton confess vantage, and was surprise which the boy arranged it

"Your tutor is coming said; "so you will have pl

"So you are taking care of yourself? That's right. What's Headache?"

"No," she answered; "I was on my drive. The O'Briens had come and Mr. West. You had better have seen them."

"Shall I stay with you, or go off with Mervyn.

Mrs. Middleton did not take either course, and was about to go to the school-room, when Cawood answered for her.

"Yes, come along with me, old friend of your mother's. We'll go and see what has gone wrong with the children."

Mervyn wearied of Sir John for a time, and began to wonder what they were about. He thought that their father had arrived, or had run down to see him. So he went into the room with the news.

"Uncle Rowley's come!"

"No," said Mervyn; "it was on
find her in the drawing-room, so
and found her."

"But what did you want her
Cecily.

"Oh, I don't know; nothing
only to have a talk with her."

Cecily looked very surprised.

"A talk with her; how very odd
ing to have a talk with ma(mma)
talk about? I'm sure I shouldn't
say."

"I suppose that's because you're
girl," said Mervyn, rather puzzled.
and I, when I'm at home, sometimes
the whole afternoon. I dare say you
you're older. Nina would find plenty
Aunt Lydia about, I dare say; wo
Nina?"

Now Nina, though pretending to
listening intently to this conversation,
very glad that it was Cecily, and not I

"I know a capital thing that mother," he went on, unheeding, kerchief dipped in eau-de-cognac laid on the forehead. Mother's get cured by that. Did you ever

"No," said Nina, in a low voice

"What do you do, then?"

"Nothing," said Nina, her truth itself over her feelings of shame.

"I'm afraid you're not a good man." Mervyn, looking fixedly at her away

Nina tried in vain to get searching eye.

"It's not my fault," she said, half

She quite longed to explain to him all was, and yet she felt it would be best to find it out his own way.

"You don't understand," she said, reproachfully

Mervyn was seized with remorse at her unhappy; and, embracing her warmly, he bade her to talk of something else.

"What do you generally do at these parties?" he said; "let us have some fun!"

O'Brien. "I'm expecting her to minute."

Just then a bell rang.

"There it is. I must take her And Wilson carried the baby alone with Totty. The little fellow seeing a stranger, seemed terrified.

"Don't be frightened, Totty," said he. "I will take care of you."

But the child was unused to strangers. He shrank back.

"Where's Nursey? I want her," said Mervyn. "She's coming back," said he. "I will cry, Totty."

But Totty could not stand it. He was very shy and nervous. Large tears gathered in his mournful eyes.

Mervyn was much distressed, and did not know what to do.

"Oh, don't cry, little man," he said. "I am here!"

And he executed a somersault.

But Totty didn't move, and Mervyn appointed.

"Why won't he come, Nina?"

"He can't," said Nina, in a low voice.

"Can't!" echoed Mervyn; "do you
can't walk yet?"

Nina shook her head.

"Why, when I saw him in London,
would run very soon."

"I thought so then, but"

"Why, Nina, is he so delicate as all
never going to be strong, like other boys?"

Nina couldn't trust herself to speak.

"Poor little fellow," said Mervyn, in

"You needn't pity him," said Nina,
haunted as usual by the fear that Totty
considered a black sheep; "he's very ha-

As if in confirmation of herasse
Totty looked up with a smile and said,
look at my pictures."

"He likes you, Mervyn," exclaimed
Nina, prised out of her reserve; "he doesn't
like new people."

opened, and Mrs. Middleton, c
appeared upon the scene, close] husband. She stopped short in]

The school-room table was 1
the window, and the chairs wer
Mervyn, with Edmund on his
wildly round the room, jumping c
books and maps, that were placed
purpose) at measured intervals; in
Cecily, who was darting about w
rapidity; while Nina blew a horn, a
his hands from his corner.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed
"what is the meaning of this uproar?

"We're hunting," answered M.
and breathless; "and we're having
Cecily's the fox. Tally ho! Yonder
do you stop, Cecily! And Nina! go
horn."

So saying, Mervyn, who was the
did not seem discomposed at Mrs. M
trance, bounded over a big heap c
catching his foot in a loose one at

n, dressed for dinner,
losely followed by her
in her astonishment
was pushed up against
were heaped upon it.
his back, was racing
ing over little heaps of
laced (evidently for the
ls; in full pursuit after
out with inconceivable
horn, and Totty clapped

imed Mrs. Middleton
uproar!"

red Mervyn, laughing
having a capital run.
Yonder he goes! Why
ina! go on blowing the

was the only one who
t Mrs. Middleton's en-
; heap of books, and
one at the top, me-

sured his length on the ground, rolling over Edmund as he fell.

"Bravo!" exclaimed his uncle, laughing, "you took that fence well!"

"This will never do," said Mrs. Middleton. "Mervyn, you must remember your cousins are young ladies, and you must not teach them these rough games."

"Oh! nonsense, Lydia!" said Colonel Middleton, "what does it matter! It will do them all the good in the world. They're much too prim and old-fashioned. I never saw Nina look so animated, and look what a colour Cecily has got. Little Totty, too! See how he enjoys it!"

"Totty!" exclaimed Mrs. Middleton, "how did Totty get here?"

"I brought him down, Aunt Lydia," said Mervyn, running up; "he was so dull all alone in the nursery, and wanted to come."

Happily for all parties, the dinner-bell rang at that moment, and Mrs. Middleton hurried away. Colonel Middleton remained behind a moment to wish them all good-night, and Mervyn and Cecily

eagerly asked for leave to go or Colonel Middleton ran off laughing would not be responsible; but he find his laugh had been taken for he ran downstairs he heard the up with greater force than ever; and voice reached him as he crossed ho! Yonder he goes!"

And so ended Mervyn's first day

END OF VOL. I.

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GETHER.

go on with their game
laughing, declaring he
but he was not sorry to
en for assent, when as
the uproar recommence
; and Mervyn's ringing
passed the hall: "Tally

irst day at Granton.

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A S T O R Y

BY

FLORENCE MONTGOMERY,

AUTHOR OF "MISUNDERSTOOD."

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

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THROWN TOGETHER.

CHAPTER I.

Mrs. Middleton's Headache.

THE order of the next day was rather changed. Mervyn's tutor arrived at nine, and from that hour till nearly luncheon-time he was closeted with him in a little room looking out into the kitchen-garden.

There was comfort to come, however. His uncle informed him at luncheon that Mr. West was a cricketer, and that there was going to be a game in the field outside that afternoon, which Mervyn was welcome to join.

This was great news for the boy; and he ran up to his room directly, to put on his cricketing things and get his bat. He looked into the school-room on his way down, and found his cousins dressed for walking.

"Ain't you coming to watch
said.

"No," said Cecily; "we're goi
walk on the high road. Isn't it a

"Oh, what a pity! Shall I as
let you come and watch us, instead

"Oh, you can't go to mamm
she's shut up in her room, ill."

"Ill!" exclaimed Mervyn; "wa
wasn't at luncheon? I was wonder
was. What is the matter?"

"I don't know," said Cecily.

"Not know! Nina, don't you kn
"She has got a very bad headache
said Nina.

"Has she?" he exclaimed; "have
Nina?"

"No."

"Ain't you going to her?"

"No."

Mervyn looked curiously at Nina;
beginning to understand her a little;
press the question, but remained

ETHER.

watch the game?" he
re going for a dull old
t it a bore?"
ll I ask Aunt Lydia to
instead!"
mamma!" said Cecily
ill."
; "was that why she
wondering where she
ily.

: you know?"
headache, I believe,"
l; "have you seen her,
"

, at Nina; but he was
a little; so he did not
ained standing in the

middle of the room, swinging his bat round and round, and evidently turning something over in his mind.

"How nice you look in your white flannel and blue cap," said Cecily, admiringly.

"Do I?" he said, absently. "I know what I'll do," he finished, suddenly. "I'll try my bandage dipped in eau-de-cologne and water; I am sure it will do her good." And he ran out of the room, leaving his bat behind him.

Nina had an instinctive feeling that a struggle had been going on in her cousin's mind, and that it had been hard for him to give up his favourite game for his aunt's sake. She was filled with admiration for him, though she felt fearful as to how his sacrifice would be received.

Mrs. Middleton was prostrate with a headache on the sofa, and had given orders that no one should disturb her; when, to her surprise, without knock or warning of any kind, her dressing-room door slowly opened, and somebody came in.

"Who is there? who is there?" she exclaimed; "you can't come in."

"Oh, it is only me," said a clear young voice;

and the tone was so confident
of one who merely meant to
and was sure of a welcome.
said nothing more, and on
who her visitor might be. Then
saw Mervyn, with a bottle of
hand and a half-filled tumbler
advancing quietly towards her.

"*You, Mervyn! No, no. I am here now. I have got a very*

"*Oh, I won't let any of them assure you,*" said Mervyn, as he set the glass and bottle on a little table. "*Then we shall be as quiet as possible.*

"*But what do you want?*" she asked.

"Well, only a pocket-handkerchief," she answered. "I got the water and handkerchiefs from Uncle Rowley's dressing-room. The handkerchiefs did not do; they were too large. Where do you keep yours? I have someones, like mother's. I shall want a new handkerchief. Is your head very bad?"

GETHER.

ent, so completely that
, assert a perfect right,
, that Mrs. Middleton
y turned round to see
o her astonishment she
eau-de-cologne in one
r of water in the other,
r.

can't have any children
- bad headache."

he children come in, I
he deposited his glass
I'll shut the door, and
le."

she exclaimed.
kerchief now," he an-
d the eau-de-cologne
room; but his hand-
were not soft enough.
Oh, I see! in that
Here are some nice
want two, you know.

Taken by surprise, Mrs. Middleton answered "Dreadful!" and, indeed, it was so bad just at that moment, that she felt incapable of asking the boy any questions, or of making any further efforts to get rid of him.

She lay there, forgetful of his presence, till she was reminded of it by feeling a cold damp something laid gently across her throbbing temples. It felt like ice against her burning head, and, closing her eyes with a sense of keen pleasure in the sensation, she involuntarily exclaimed, "How delicious!"

"I thought you'd like it," said the boy, triumphantly; "and as soon as this gets the least warm, I have got another ready. It is soaking in the glass now. You need not tell me when you are ready for it, because it will hurt you to talk. If you just move your hand, I shall understand."

Too glad to avail herself of the permission, Mrs. Middleton lay still for some time, and then gave the required signal. Mervyn was watching for it, and instantly removed the handkerchief; but, before putting on a fresh one, he dabbed her forehead with the mixture, and then blew softly on it. The effect

was so charming, that Mrs. Middleton was dreading every moment that he would come over her. But he seemed to know exactly how to stop her, and at the right moment he stopped her with a cold bandage again.

By degrees Mrs. Middleton's head lessened, and a delicious sleep came over her. The glare of light, which, when she first lay down, though her eyes were closed, was very pleasant, that she began to feel that there was a monotonous droning sound for which she could not account, a sound that was both soothing and pleasant.

She was gradually dozing off, unconscious that at intervals the bandage was changed, as soon as it grew too hot to be of use.

At last she remembered nothing, and woke some time after, free from all pain. Opening her eyes, she found the room was carefully darkened, and she was sitting at the window, reading a book.

if the room had not been so nice a way, how was that? I remember th up when I first came in to lie dow

"Oh, *I* darkened the room," : knew you would never get to slee light."

"It was very kind of you," she warmth than she usually expressed, ' ful. You must have done it very me not to have heard it. But I a boy, you must have been very du the dark. I hope you had an am

"Well, not very," he answered not matter. It was the only one I thought would amuse you. It was as if you had been reading it; your place."

"But I don't quite understand ' ton; "you were not reading it to : By the way, I did hear a droning as I went off. Could that have : out loud?"

Mervyn went off into fits o

"Is this what you have been reading?"
aunt, laughing.

"Yes," he answered. "I read from 'distressing,' to 'Hydrophobia,' causes of got to that I left off, for I saw you ha sleep."

"But were you not longing to play the time?"

The answer was painted on the boy's face, but he only said, "Oh, as long as I was not too busy to think of it."

"But when you left off?" persisted Mrs. Middleton.

"Well, yes—rather," he replied.

"Then why did you not go? I mean, done all you could for me, and I walked across the room."

"Well, you see, Aunt Lydia had creaky boots on, and I was afraid I would slip and fall."

Mrs. Middleton looked at him, and said, "Well, I won't detain you any longer. Run out and have your game. I am wondering what has become of Tom and his friends."

become, even if it were not natural to him, accustomed to sit a great deal in his room, otherwise amusing himself, in a way which could not really be fond of criticism. He never had been able to give his opinion readily, and amuse himself in doing so. As she thought over it, she went to pull up the blind. The first thing she saw was Mervyn's graceful figure in the garden, relieved by his blue cap. He was after the ball which had gone into the furthest end of the field, and had hurled it with a tremendous stroke, hitting the wicket with so true an aim that it flew through the air.

"Well done!" shouted his mother. "You should never get that fellow out of your sight again."

The next batter sent the ball over the fence into the garden; and Mrs. Middleton, who was watching him from the window, admired the agility with which he had leaped over the fence to catch it. She laughed heartily, and swung himself on the garden seat, hardly got back to his place before the ball came some way above his head.

of Nina attempting to come near or even inquiring how I was after

How different this boy was! I sought her out since his arrival. seemed to be in her society. Nir selfish, so indifferent; Cecily, so the boys entirely taken up with th own amusements. Magdalen w lucky in her boy.

"There must be somethin children's dispositions," she said "A screw loose somewhere. I v them so cold and selfish?"

So lay and pondered this wo own hand had put from her driven away the attentions that receive and encourage. She h her own fault, the watchful care and the proud protecting affec The tender solicitude, the thou which other women meet with of their children, had never selfishness she had never done

THROWN TOGETHER

defiant expression which she often
her shyness. The fact was, she v
see her, and rather taken aback;
Mervyn's conduct, she had been fo
trying to show her mother a little a
All the way along she had been
mind that she would go to her roo
and ask how she was, and wheth
anything for her.

She could not help feeling it w
Mervyn's example, and show a little
the proceeding was so novel, that
if she should be able to manage it.
so odd, she had told herself; her r
so surprised. Perhaps she might me
and at the very thought her pride h

How often she had rehearsed he
the walk, in her own mind; how of
settled upon, and then rejected, d
carrying it out, would be incredible
as she. Supposing she knocked a
softly, and there was no answer,

and she had soothed her **consci**
pricked at the sight of Mervyn's co
herself she was not to **blame**; i
else's fault, though whose she cou
But it wouldn't do. Conscience |
had *not* done all she might in f
for going to her mother's room; a
suddenly thought of gathering b
wild flowers. Then if her m
“Who's there? What do you wan
said “You can't come in;” the a
“It is me, and I've brought you s
Also she might add quickly, “
them if you don't want them.”
would pick them, and then see he

Accordingly, she had gathered
was beginning to feel quite brav
ject; when, as we have seen, eve
by meeting her mother in the ~~is~~
quite well again. The revulsion
abrupt that Nina quite started;
shy and guilty, and almost as i
guess what was passing in her r

There was no mistaking which inquiry from real interest, and she forced herself to make it.

Mrs. Middleton addressed her nephew.

"Thank you, my dear boy, well again. I don't want forcing," she concluded, coldly; "if you pray do not oblige yourself. You do feel it, you certainly a manner of showing it. I wish be as thoughtful and unselfish there would be no need to p yourself. Your enquiries would but as it is, I believe you ta and nothing."

Nina could not stand it; she ran into the house.

was full of company, they were very seldom sent for.

The first time after Mervyn's arrival the message came up that they would not be received; his astonishment was very great, and he could not believe he and his cousins would not really be welcome again at the uncle and aunt's again that evening, not even telling them good-night. He was bustling off to his dressing-room, to see if he could find her there. Nina advised him not.

"You won't find her, Mervyn."

"Why not? I did the first day."

"That was quite a chance. When the house is full she always stays with the old ladies, when there are no visitors."

"Bother the company! I will they, Nina?"

"If these went, others would now be all the same. From the first old house is always full."

"But, Nina! how can you now be kissing Aunt Lydia and wishing good-bye?"

his mother, felt the want of son to speak to. Puzzled him, he longed for some or at least to help him to im

Had he had many oppo his aunt, it would all have naturally as possible; but he room and its life, and he rest. He saw his aunt at lun during the ten minutes before never. He made several att she was always surrounded by one or two unsuccessful pilg room, he had given it up.

And the effect it all had press him greatly. Sometim school-room life weighed upon the want of sympathy between the school-room chilled him cold, loveless home; and as the warmth and love of the been accustomed, the lonelin

she leant her head upon her hands, and gazed him as he sat huddled up by the window with face hidden: a whole world of pity in her eyes. Suddenly Mervyn looked up, and their met.

Something in their expression must have told him all that the poor stiff little tongue could say; for the boy rose up, and came and threw himself on the floor by her side.

"Kiss me, Nina," the poor forlorn child claimed; "nobody ever kisses me now; nobody since the evening mother went away."

And Nina, moved with pity, put her arms round him, and kissed him again and again.

"She'll soon come back,"
ingly.

"Say it again," whispered she
closer to her.

And Nina said it over and over again.

From that time they under-

ter; and Mervyn, secure of sym-

He understood that, cold and

looked, she was not really so;

miration for it. She marv
her all the same. Under ^{the} const
self, Mervyn's caressing ways
She began rather to like being
would not for the world have
Mervyn's affectionate farewell.
time, she maintained her res
leaving the talking to him.
generally, in their long so-call
was his curious store of thoug
came tumbling out as they rode
was always intelligent and intere
volunteered an idea of her own

She learnt a good deal fro
from his constant intercourse w
so much better stored than Nin
a great deal in that way, whi
have picked up otherwise. So
repeat things his mother had s
opinions on various subjects. H
discursive, but always attractive.
gion came in in its turn, whic
shy. It was a subject on which

and a desire to conceal, and
her ban.

The little prevarications of
to her. Her mother's civilities
she did not care for, the little
savouring of falsehood, were
and her mother judged accord-

The practice of saying
thought positively wicked, and
up her mind that, when she
give the footman private instruc-
Middleton *is* at home, but do
to see you."

Nina's religion was as void of
part of her; in fact, she repro-
in her religion thus: *God, like*
such and such virtues, and re-
ance of such and such duties;
them were punished hereafter.
love for his creatures and wish
in God than she had been able
for herself and a wish for her
mother.

"Well, I mean that I think you tell a great many stories

"Mervyn!" she indignant told a story in my life."

Mervyn was not at all outburst.

"That depends," he said "on what you call a story. act stories, though we should them. I don't suppose you w done something you had; but tending you don't care about and all that sort of thing. It's you don't, Nina," he concluded contradiction reached him—"to you."

The boy, in his honest si deeper truth than he had any id a form of pride—and poor little form—which is an affectation be does not exist in ourselves. The scorn affectation or deceit of any themselves on being candid and

it's very wicked," she could not help it; pent-up tears *would* come, at a violent fit of crying. "Oh Mervyn, I love him so *awfully*, that I can't bear it; and . . . and . . ."

But in a minute Mervyn's anger was forgotten, and he was asking her pardon for having made her unhappy. He would never never mention the

Nina allowed herself to be comforted, and did not bear him any ill-will.

"I don't mind *you* knowing it, as long as you don't tell anyone else. You won't?" And Mervyn, with a smile, promised eagerly. But the promise was not kept, and bore fruit in after-times.

Another time, Mervyn had been reading some pictures in a Scripture story book on Sunday afternoon; and Nina, who had been listening to the story, had been every now and then stopping to listen.

When the little boy had gone

"Well, but tell me just what you want to hear how you

"I told him it was because
loved them so much **that He**
Then Edmund asked me how
even more than our mothers lov-
how else to explain. **But I co-**
that, could I?" **And the peo-**
his face, which always brok-
thought of his mother.

No answer from **Nina**.

"Mother says," he went on
"that God sends us mothers
love Him. We couldn't, she
love Him all at once, because
He teaches us to love our mot-
by that we learn to love Him.
quite easy, doesn't it, Nina?"

"Yes—but suppose," said I.
"Suppose we don't love our mother
learn then?"

"Oh, but then I never heard that, you know."

A very curious expression I
face at these words. She looked
said a good deal if she chose
effort, she restrained herself, a
sort of things?"

"Oh, all the right things,
obedient, and kind to everyone
people who want help, keeping
and not being put out when they
you know them all, Nina, as
what I mean is, that when we
we are loving God, whether we
cause we are trying to please Him
Him."

"But, Mervyn," she objected,
all that. One reads in little stories
doing so, and in the Bible that
all; but I never saw anyone really

Mervyn looked at her in astonishment
minute or two, and then said, "All
you don't know mother as I do."

"Does she always?" asked Nina.
"Always," he answered proudly.

underneath was written, 'H good.' I used to say it was of her. She always stopped r the same. Then when she to grow like Him, I used to grow like her. The fact wa same."

"And did you?" asked Ni
"Oh no," said Mervyn; "to grow like either. I never d

"Yes, you do," said Nina; always kind and loving to ev how you manage it, but you wish I was like you."

"Like me, Nina?" said the scarlet. "Oh, if you only k unselfish, or patient, or anythi

"Well, but you're better restlessly. "I don't believe difficult, Mervyn."

"Yes, it is awfully diff things seem so difficult. Bu everybody thinks it is their c

Cecily and Edmund. ^{Ten}
Aunt Lydia speaks to you
try to hide from everybody
and”

“Oh, Mervyn,” she exclai
the impossible things.”

“Just what I said once to

“And what did she say?”

“She taught me this verse:
impossible with men . . . ”

“There!” said Nina, trium
says they are impossible too.”

“But wait,” said Mervyn;
You shouldn’t interrupt me in
possible with God.’ That mea
make them possible. I can’t e
Nina; but if you try, you’ll se
and look at the glow-worms.”

Nina sighed deeply; but ever
idea of a Strength outside herse
first time into her mind.

“Wait one minute, Mervyn,”
to ask you one thing”

world, and that will show you who I am to be. You needn't tell me who I am to be.

Away flew Nina's thought down the stairs, where her baby brother had been. Her heart swelled at the thought of how gladly she would do anything for him; how willingly she would please him; and how anyone trying to gain her affections immediately fell in love with her little brother, who had a wayward little heart a faint glimmer of that higher love which works in the world and to do of His good pleasure.

"I see, Mervyn," she said, after a moment's silence, "and now I am ready to look at the world again."

Mervyn's influence gradually began to work on her. Imperceptibly she softened, and ceased to be so stern and reserved. This, in its turn, acted upon her. She found in her more and more of a sympathetic companion, he grew happier and more resolute. They became the most inseparable companions. Mervyn came to her with every

violently and at much longer intervals
high spirits and power of enjoyment
selves over the uncongenial circumstances
he found himself thrown; and no
him laughing and talking with *Nina*,
over the country, would suppose he
sorrow in the world.

On their return to the school
spirits gave way.

Nina waited till Cecily had gone
then came up to the window where
"What is the matter, Mervyn?"
"Oh, Nina!" he exclaimed, with a
"I do want mother so badly."

Nina bent down and kissed his face
refuge in her old answer.

"She will soon be back again."

"No one seems to love anyone in
—he went on passionately—"it is a delight
to be in."

Nina was powerless to comfort him.
how true it was. Had she not often
the same feeling herself?

But she had a cure which had never
at such times. She would try its power.

"Come and see Totty," she whispered.

The boy raised himself wearily,
her without a word.

So the two children stole up stairs
softly along the passages to the bed-

But no sound came from them
kneeling in the darkness, and I
began it—alone.

"Come away now," he whispered;
And taking her unresisting hand,

They returned, as noiselessly
the now dark and silent school-room.

"Come out," said Mervyn. "I
back into that dreary room."

So they went down a little back-stair,
opened a side door.

The moon was shining peacefully
over the lawns and gardens as the children stood
in the grass, and made fantastic shadows
of the little figures.

Lights were seen at the dining-room windows,
and the voices of the gentlemen could be heard
within as they sat over their wine.

"Come into the shrubbery," whispered he.
The way there led them past the dining-room
window, and they could see in. The gentlemen
were sitting in groups all over the room,
one old lady to whom Mrs. M~~rs.~~ Addleton

"What is it?" asked Mervyn. "or a man with his head in his han

"They say it's a pair of brother answered, smiling. "They fought moonlight night, for the love of the both were killed. So they are d arm-in-arm for ever on moonlight have eyes blazing like live coal, the hatred they bear one another. you, sir, it's all nonsense—it's just thing more. Good-night to you." passed on.

"Did you ever hear the story asked Mervyn, as they walked along.

"No," she answered. "I have h say the shrubbery was haunted; but more. I hate ghost stories."

"Do you?" he said. "I think t fun. Why should you mind? You them, do you?"

"No," she answered; "not exac frighten me all the same, and I think

in the light of the silvery mo-
sound to be heard, and th
dazzled by the glitter of the
waters. The peace of it, an
fected Mervyn strangely.

"Oh, Nina!" he exclaimed,
think Heaven must be *like this*,
Nina didn't answer.

"Don't you often wonder
like?"

Still no answer.

"Why don't you speak, Nina
talking about Heaven?"

"Yes—no—I mean I don't k
about it."

"But don't you often wonder a
"No, I don't think I do. But
talking about it if you like. What
like?"

"I don't know exactly. One thi
not like, and that's Granton."

"I don't . . . quite understand,"
"I mean that in Heaven everybo

being with God that will *make*
Heaven. Do you know she *says*
to go to Heaven if God were *not*
Nina looked very puzzled, and

"In Thy presence is the *full*
Mervyn; "that is her favourite *verse*
She says it explains it so well. Did
it, Nina?"

"Do I understand what?"

"Why that some day we *shall* live,
that we shall only be happy *where*
that may be."

"No," she said, hardly above a
"Sometimes I think you never *want*
"Do *you*?"

"Well, just a little. I understand
you see. I know that I love *mother*.
I am happiest when I am with *her*,
helps me to see that some day, when
as much as that, I shall be *happiest*,
says I shall understand it better,

"But why do you say I *shall* *never*
it?"

seized with a superstitious dread
shadows be?"

The gardener's story, so late
self upon her unwilling attention,
all she told herself to the contrary,
deny the witness of her own eyes,
showed her, advancing steadily
forms, arm-in-arm, with eyes like
times sensitive and imaginative, I
just then strung to their highest
the scene around, the thoughts of
had been so lately dwelling, all come
out of the commonplace, and to insti-
tious dread. She felt herself
standing on the narrow boundary-line
the real from the unreal, the natural
natural; and she was, for the moment,
distinguish between the material and
world. Only one thought was clear,
she had never come. She shivered before
approach of the shadows, and longed to
back. Not only did she dread them
but she felt the thought of them would

"How many children has Middleton

"Oh, a large family; seven or eight,

"I saw a very pretty little boy at window this evening, but he looked terrible! What is the matter with him?"

"Well, that's a sad business. He had a day's health since he was born. I wonder if he has struggled on so long. But he will live to grow up, poor little fellow . . . fellow!

And the voices and footsteps passed the other side of the water, and were lost in distance. Like birds of evil omen they had been, and everything rejoiced at their departure. The air grew still again, and the sweet scents resumed their sway; and the moon shone as peaceful as before. Only one thing was missing. The trees, waving slightly in the breeze, bent their heads and listened, as if waiting for the clapping of hands, for the sound of voices, for the missing sound, as if listening for the call to speak again of love and Heaven. They waited and listened in vain. When the voices reached one of the two little figures in

room, now full of gentlemen, laughing and drinking tea.

The child, flitting by in the darkness to see her mother, the gayest of the herself and chatting gaily; had time ever door open, and the two smokers entered every one who had pronounced Totty rant take a chair by her mother's side laughing, into a conversation with her.

The child could hear the mother even at that distance, and it jarred she turned shudderingly away.

"Can she know?" she asked herself, "really know?"

Only too readily the answer came, quick stern judgment of the young.

"She knows, and she does not care."

Wildly her heart swelled with the notion that Totty should be so despised for. It bore down even the fresh hope which she had been overwhelmed just

She let Mervyn lead her upstairs

these thoughts recur. For what were
fantastic terrors to those which assailed
What grim supernatural fancy could th.
her pillow, and drive all sleep away?

Ah! belief in ghosts may indeed be
highly civilised day, yet are there some
all our enlightenment, we shall never
Ghosts in white garments, shadowy
headless knights, with other creations
are laid for ever, swept away with the
long-past age of ignorance and super-
torting anxieties, haunting fears, an he-
less dread: *these* are the ghosts that m-
night slumbers, and they will walk th-
ours till time shall be no more.

"Oh no, I won't, Mervyn; I

"Why, last Sunday you dropped book twice, and tumbled over time you stood up."

"There'll hardly be room to sit. There are such a lot of people think there are four ladies besides six gentlemen besides papa. I will be!"

"Why do you want to sit Mervyn, as he wrote down a letter.

"You're so kind, and find me never will."

"Why don't you find them before? Such a trouble," she sighed; remember those horrid old Roman if it was so silly of them to have letters don't you? V.'s and X.'s, and all that.

Mervyn laughed. "All right; I'll see Cecily evinced much delight.

"I think it's rather fun having a in the pew," she went on. "I like se-

court the evening before through window.

"These are my little girls," said "and this is my nephew, Mervyn J. come and say 'How do you do?'

Mervyn was up in a moment face and outstretched hand. Nina hung back, shy and frightened sudden entrance had alarmed her, conscious directly of rough hair and

The difference between her and those of her nephew struck forcibly, and she looked much annoyed.

"Come forward, Cecily. What for, and why do you put your hands in your pockets?"

Cecily blushed all over, and something unintelligible.

"Why can't you say 'Good-morning' and not like a little charity-girl. I he shakes hands properly."

"My hand is inky," she said timidly.

spoilt her good looks, and daughters for appearing to suggest that they had been a failure. He had carried all before him.

angry with him. He looked bright, and so pleasant, that the old lady should have been pleased with him. She left the room in a hurry, and went to put on her things for dinner.

As soon as Nina was ready, she rejoined Mervyn, and they both stood by the room window, watching the party on the lawn.

"How smart they all are," I said. "Look at the gowns and the parasols; even the men are well dressed in the sun. There goes Uncle Rowley, with his coat and a flower in his button-hole. And there goes Lydia! Oh! there she comes. She is looking very well today. Look what a hunt she's having."

Mrs. Middleton heard voices, and turned to see who it was.

"What have you lost, Aunt?" asked Mervyn.

THROWN TOGETHER
as the d
gate

THROWN TOGETHER go the same way as the drawing-rooms avoided stiles and gates, so they arrived first, and established themselves before came. Mervyn sat between Nina and Cecily, free were told by Madame to take up a room as possible. She herself contrived to squeeze against a pillar, as flat as a little corner up against everybody in a room. They proceeded to announce everybody in a room as they arrived. Mr. Mellish the miller, and his son the butcher and his wife, the little boy to-day, the hasp, the key at the turn,

Mervyn sat between Nina and Cecily, three were told by Madame to take up a room as possible. She herself contrived to squat against a pillar, as flat a pancake. Cecily proceeded to announce everybody in a whisper as they arrived. "There's Mr. Mellish the miller, and his wife. They have come the butcher and his wife. Perhaps their little boy to-day. Perhaps Oh! look at the turnpike woman! She hasn't had on her bonnet! See how long it sits on his head. Oh!

"There's Mr. Mellish the miller, and his wife. They haven't
brought their little boy to-day. Perhaps he's got a
new bonnet! She hasn't had one for a year. Here's
a poor old Langley; see how bent double he is. Oh,
he only wears it on
smock-frock. Oh, Mervyn, isn't it fine!
Here comes the butcher and his wife. They haven't
spared as they arrived. Proceeded to announce everybody in a
hurry as they arrived. "There's Mr. Mellish the miller, and his wife. They haven't
brought their little boy to-day. Perhaps he's got a
new bonnet! She hasn't had one for a year. Here's
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he only wears it on
smock-frock. Oh, Mervyn, isn't it fine!

than ever. In the middle of raised her eyes. Just at that measured tones from the ch father and thy mother." Clear of Mervyn's voice, and his eye thoughts had flown. Deep in her face, and from the tightly came no sound at all. The cler text, "In Thy presence is the ful exchanged a glance with Nina, ledged with her eyes. The serm affected her strangely. It was plain; but it recalled Mervyn's wo water, and seemed to make cle tried to explain. When the cle happy homes, warmed by family a all at sea; such happiness found a loveless home. But when he went affections, she could think of her li placing herself in fancy by his be dawned more clear. Thus does weak things of the world to work purposes. For when the sermon

way on, and Mervyn was running
sently he fell back, and came to

"Nina, why do you stay behi
"I don't know."

"What is the matter, Nina?"
"I don't know."

"Come and talk," he said, pu
Madame. Nina did not resist h

"The clergyman said just t
didn't he?" he said triumphant
of her all the time. Who we
Nina?"

"Totty," she answered, rou
by his sympathetic appreciation.
Mervyn; didn't you?"

And she looked rather anxio
"Oh yes," he said warmly; 'word."

Just then Colonel Middleton
to Mervyn, and the boy ran a
regretting that their conversation
ruptly broken off, Nina did not re
state in which he had found her

received with acclamations by the sa
say.

"But I don't like leaving you alone," he said, as they sat together in the waiting for the hour to come; "shan't dull and lonely?"

Nina had certainly felt a little dis-
prospect. She had learnt to prize him
much, and to look forward to their life
together; but she was glad he should
change. So she did not let her own
ment appear.

"I shall go to bed soon," she answered.
"Yes; and I'll come and tell you all
my way to bed," he said eagerly.

It was an unfortunate evening for
she was still haunted by
she had overheard the night before, and
was full of fears about her little brother.
caught a fresh cold a day or two before,
nights running she had found him at
coughing.

When Mervyn was gone down stairs,

CHAPTER V.

A Midnight Scene.

COLONEL and Mrs. Middleton ball the next evening, and as they it Mrs. Middleton mused with gr the events of the evening. She ha very successful. Her party had e she had provided some of the room; and she herself had bee nearly all the quadrilles and land a great satisfaction to her, beca a little shaky about her age, al that she was considered a middl husband looked, and was, so her, that she was constantly in for his mother.

They reached home at : o'clock; and after wishing he Mrs. Middleton went slowly up

"Too bad of Wilson," muttered **M**
"she accustoms him to this walking
and now he can't sleep without it."

She walked on; but the **wailing** in
she stopped again to listen.

"Perhaps he is not well. **I think**
and see what is the matter; but **I mu**
gown first."

She went into her dressing-room,
her maid; but the sound of crying pursued
there, and she began to get uneasy.

"Go up to the nursery, and see
matter with Master Thomas," **she said**
soon as her maid appeared.

She walked up and down rather rest
while. "So tiresome, if he is going to
Wilson is away."

Mrs. Middleton had no experience of
her children had been strong; and Tott
exception, she had always given over
Wilson in matters of health. She thought
difficulties presenting themselves, and it

less in the absence of the nurse,
nursery-maid was helpless too.

It was such a sudden change
she had left—so quick a transition
on which her mind had been so
her fear she jumped to conclusion
a new sensation for her. She had
or conceived the possibility of s
the idea rushed upon her,
ness rose in her breast, ^{a fee}
Totty, of all her children, was
least spare. “He is the only
ever comes to be kissed, or show
said an unwonted voice in her
personal responsibility, too, when
she advanced very nervously in
it was with her usual imperious
motioned away the nursery-maid
on the bed.

But she had forgotten how
ance would be to the child—
satin and flowers coming into h

Mrs. Middleton and Jane bot
be raving, till the latter percei
just caught the necklace and
Middleton's neck, making them a

"I think it's the diamonds,
timidly; for all the servants w
Middleton.

"Then undo the thing and ta
mistress, harshly; "and be quick

She came near and held]
Jane should unfasten the clasp.
light played upon her tiara, a
again.

"Her hair . . . the fire! . . .]

With no gentle hand Mrs.]
tiara from her head and thrust i
and bracelets, into Jane's hand.

"Take them and throw thei
she exclaimed. Her voice sour
and the hand which held out the
a little; but her face was immov

"Totty, don't you know man
bending over the child.

"But, my dear little boy," she said in despair, "I don't know Dinah."

All the mother was awake in despair, for she would give anything in able to find out what the poor little boy wanted, and to be the one to soothe him.

He was getting very excited, and the sleep seemed slighter every moment. It made him cough more violently; and he was getting quite alarmed about it.

Anxiety had the effect of making him worse, so she turned sharply round upon Jane.

"How is it you can't remember?"

"I'm very sorry, ma'am," answered Jane. "It's clean gone out of my head. I'll get it back again in a minute if we could find it. I'm quite well, for it's sleep he wants."

"But what is to be done if we can't get him to sleep?" exclaimed Mrs. Middleton. "There is no one in the house who can sing him to sleep, night after night."

There, standing in the doorway, was in her little white nightgown, her feet were bare. Her dark hair hung over her shoulders, and she carried a little basket on her head. The light, shining on her fair, handsome little face, wearing its gentle expression. Steadily she advanced towards the door, and her mother, bending over to the door, did not perceive her. And nearer she came, her eyes brightened, and yet having in them a certain expression, as if they reached on to the side, and saw nothing either to the left or to the right. Still Mrs. Middleton looked round. Totty began tossing restlessly than ever, perpetually moving, so sleepy. Sing Dinah, mamma!

"My poor little boy," exclaimed Mrs. Middleton. "I wish I could. But I don't know it. I never heard it."

"I can sing it," said a clear voice; and Mrs. Middleton, turning

said: "Carry me, Nina; put me to
answered, "Yes, darling, I will."

Mrs. Middleton watched her. She saw Nina put down the lar over Totty, push back the hair f arrange his nightgown about hi with astonishment, the eyes that at her, assume the glow of tend saw the love and the pity brea parts of the face, till the child se and she was too bewildered to sp "Sing Dinah, Nina; sing Dina
"I will, darling, I will."

Did that soft whisper come that cold imperious child? How him in her arms, and how confid head on her shoulder, and his arr Fearing that he may be cold, she shawl round him, carefully envelop feet. The oft-repeated entreaty sponse now, and softly the qu through the room, and the plain child ceases.

she could not tell *why* that long breast to do for her boy who desired, nor why her heart was so trouble. And then to see another—own child—step in where there was her, and do what she had been unable to accomplish! And do it, too, in such a way. *That* was what galled her, both so independent of her, the girl was an outsider, a looker-on; she, who had always been accustomed to be put before everybody else, nobody. It was a sore humiliation, and her pride were alike hurt by

“Why do I not gain my child?” she asked herself bitterly, as she paced up and down—both seeing her, so near to each other.

In spite of herself, she was fond of them; in spite of herself, she admired them. In spite of herself, Nina, bending over the sleeping boy, filled her with a new feeling. She

iced it. Generally, she ascribed
Nina's face to the child's nature,
oud, unaccountable. But how
s now? How could she mistake
ich pervaded every line of the
ending over the sleeping boy?

Nina, all this time, was quite un-
mother's presence. She was enti-
er little brother, and had forgott
her anxiety for him. Up and down
and down, still softly singing *the m*
watching with trembling anxiety th
her shoulder, lest the child should a

Satisfied at last that he was sl
she signed to the nursery-maid to
bed, and then gently laid him dow
last she continued singing, lest the
tion should rouse him.

Her labour of love completed, s
on a chair exhausted, arms and kne
bling under the boy's weight.

Mrs. Middleton's impulse was to t
arms and thank her, so great was the

CHAPTER VI.

War to the Knife.

MRS. MIDDLETON woke the next morning to find that Totty had passed a good night, though she was not quite so well. Things often look very different in the morning, and she told herself she had been unduly alarmed. With the night, too, her fears had passed away, and she acceded to the general weakness with regard to both children.

Nina's conduct, certainly, still surprised Mrs. Middleton, but it ceased to inspire her with alarm or emotion. She mused upon it for a time, but could not understand it the least. There was a habit to be a great deal with Totty, and that she exercised a very strong influence over him was also very clear.

"I never saw her notice the young girl," thought Mrs. Middleton, reflected.

In vain did Mrs. Middleton try

but rather hoped the *nurse* might throw some light upon the subject.

Wilson, in defending herself, to throw the blame upon Nina, course, if the child expected his been put to bed, he lay *awake*.

"What do you mean?" asked

Wilson answered, that for so had been trying to break Totty off seemed a little stronger, and had put him to bed awake; but that returning at supper-time to see how on, she had found Miss Nina singing.

The conversation lasted some time after the tea was over, Wilson was dispatched to tell Miss Middleton she was to go to her mother's dressing-room.

When the nurse was gone, Mrs. Wilson went to the open window and leaned out, reflecting upon the events of the night, and upon the talk which had passed between her and Wilson. She was trying to settle in her own mind what she would say to Nina when she appeared.

weapons were a strong will, a termination, and the power of a see how she fared with them.

Three months ago that day faced the struggle of their lives; II have theirs before them now.

"Do you want me, mamma?"

Mrs. Middleton started as sounded in the room, and inhaled a little. It brought back so clearly last night, and the way in which sured tones had fallen on her ear. She recalled so vividly her feelings round and confronted the little w with its streaming hair, and the smile with which she had met the glance of eyes. She felt as if she could not again, lest she should read in it which had dismayed her before.

And then the cold ring in the different, independent tone. Just so her ear at midnight; hurting and fell. It hurt and galled her now.

the girl's appearance, but Mr. Eleling was personal relief.

The pale little school-room was a different creature to the beautification of last night; and she felt less thoughts of the task which lay before her.

"Come in, and shut the door," said Mrs. Nina obeyed, and came and her mother, who had meanwhile come from an arm-chair. And then there was a silence. Middleton waited quietly for her mother to speak. Middleton felt that nothing was to be done. There she sat, and there, opposite to her, an erect, motionless little figure.

The ticking of the clock, and the fire, were distinctly heard in the room. Mrs. Middleton reigned in the room. Mrs. Middleton provoked with herself at last for nothing. She could not bear to begin, but feared being at a disadvantage. She hurried into the discussion *too ungently*.

"Totty is better," she said at last.

Clearly Nina had not expected

"Tell me instantly when it
"I don't know the exact ho
"Was it before your hair w
"Yes."

"Was it before you were d
"Yes."

"Was it directly you were
"No."

"When was it then? Speal
Very unwillingly the answe
fore I was called, directly I wo
what o'clock it was."

A short silence after this.
that sore jealous feeling inci
saw that Nina's anxiety had b
own, and that she had been b
enquiring after the boy's heal
and lost her temper.

"And pray how long is it
fancy to Totty?" she said, in
manner. "I thought you we
with the younger ones."

Poor Nina! This sudden

"How long," she resumed
been in the habit of going
Totty is in bed?"

Nina winced a little, and
can't remember."

"That is nonsense, Nina."

"I really can't, mamma."

"Then think."

The ticking of the clock
the fire again made themsel-
Middleton wondered if the &
and what course was to be
not.

But Nina raised her head

"It may be two years, or
for so long that I can't remem-

Mrs. Middleton was quite
astonishment. "Why, Wilson is
a new thing the last few days

"Wilson didn't know."

"Did no one ever know?"

"No, no one . . . except

"Except who?"

"At any rate, now that I
You must never do it again,

The hot blood came to
face and neck, and she pressed
together. She lost all control
moment.

"Never do it again!" she
"never go and see Totty at n
mamma, you can't mean it!"

"But I do mean it," ans
"And why?" burst out N

Mrs. Middleton, taken by
say it was for Totty's own
what Wilson had said about
expecting his sister; but N
imperious manner put her to
herself *why* she should care
reasons. Her innate selfishness
and, forgetting the child's
only thought of her own, an
idea of her authority being

"That is no business o

thing to your mother?—a wreath for you!"

An angry retort rose to Nelly's lips. She heard a sound in the garden, checked herself and listened. A voice, calling to her in tones of excitement.

"Nina! Nina! where are you? I have a letter from mother, and I want you! Oh, Nina! it is such a dear letter."

And a sound followed as if two girls were busily and busily kissing the paper. They stood confronting each other with stormy faces, both heard the sound of their own voices; both recognised the tones; and both instinctively turned away from the other.

Mrs. Middleton turned away from the window, and pretended to be busy with some work. Nina hastily dashed away a few steps, and then stopped to dry her eyes.

"You are the coldest, most unfeeling girl I ever met!"

I should break my word.
me."

Her eyes filled with tears alas! as we have said, Mrs. I mind had changed too, and herself for having shown weak child for having noticed it.

She thought, too, that Nina the sense of being defeated, and upon the temporary advantage turned round, and spoke sharply plainly that she looked upon them as those of task-master and slave her commands accordingly. In she had been thwarted so resolutely, she was determined it should be

Nina's spirit was roused angrily and disrespectfully. The sense of good behaviour was thrown to the winds. Mrs. Delton realised that she had real influence over the girl whatever.

In that galling moment she saw that obedience is worth which is no

CHAPTER

Nina.

ON the night of the count
awakened by the wheels of the
her father and mother home.
she had been unable to dive;
that Totty was worse; not, as
account of what she had on
but because he really seemed
and to be weaker and more ill.
Her room was,

Her room was hot, and she
and coughing; and after listening
she made up her mind to go
matter; for she remembered
and that Totty was not mu-
nursery-maid. She was surprised
she reached the nursery-door
to hear voices and see lights

had presented herself before him; the summons was so urgent over what could be wanted she was to be lectured the night before.

Her mother's first words directly. She had realised that shared her anxiety about Totty, drawn towards her than she had. But as the conversation went pure feelings had been aroused all, breaking forth every now and dark clouds of dissension, she gleams of her mother's newly-Totty. Then, too, she had been mingled with a kind of pain how overcome Mrs. Middleton by between Mervyn's love for his mother's indifference.

She had so keenly realised Mervyn's arrival, the great want of knowledge that she was half sorry for her mother when she saw she was going to realise it !

passed, she was able to think of more calmly. She would have been more frightened at its result if she had not been occupying her mind.

As the day wore on, she accused him of having done all she might on his behalf. She tried more to inspire her mother with confidence. Why had she not told her of the conversation overheard in the garden, and boldly declared it to be true? And why had she irritated her mother into laying this command upon her? She regarded her mother's prohibition as a mere trifle; she felt she must try to obey it. She mused; no, a promise was too binding once given, she would not have been able to break it. But she was going to try and act under injunction, if possible, by doing all she could to keep away from Totty that night. Mervyn was gone down to dessert, to her bed-room, undressed, and gone to sleep.

But she had not lain down long before a terror came over her—a terror of the howling of the wind.

to listen, her lips nearly touching h
When she raised her head again, sl
that she was not alone in the roo
light she saw a figure sitting by
beds; and in that figure she recogni

Very few and stern were the
from Mrs. Middleton's lips. She
all till they got into the passage; a
her daughter that she had not be
she would be guilty of so flagran
obedience, but had stationed hers
to see. That she should for th
against the repetition of such a br
mands. That sure and certain
adopted to ensure an observance
that in the meantime Nina was to
in disgrace, and not to attempt to
any communication with her mothe
whatsoever.

Mrs. Middleton then disappear
sage, and Nina went into her ovr
It was a very wearied little bei

quietly in the evening. But, t
over him and heard that dre
Wilson would very likely not
would put down his languor
sleeplessness of Monday night.
Totty had cried "Wolf" too o
likely to take alarm. All, then,
self; and her whole heart was
her object. Probably she wou
alive to Totty's condition, had
she had overheard. His ap
went for a minute into the nur
her in her resolution. Wilson w
haps Nina would have tried to
with her own fears. All the m
trying to shape a plan, but it
know how to set about it. She
desperation, of going straight t
then she remembered that she v
had been forbidden to approach
whatsoever. Besides, the futilit
to Mrs. Middleton could not bu
passed a restless morning, and

short, that the night would soon then it would be more difficult doctor.

"If I am to do it at all," she said, "I must do it at once. But

She got up and walked restlessly the room. Suddenly it came in last resource, that she would make father. It must, indeed, have born of despair; but once taken more.

She left the school-room, went to the smoking-room, and knocked. There was no answer, so she opened the door. The room was empty, and her mind told her that he was already gone. She went hasty to see if his hat were missing. By there, and his great-coat, glove put ready. He was evidently gone, had not yet started. It was nearly time by the hall clock, so that if he would go soon. Would it

CHAPTER VII

The Storm.

COLONEL MIDDLETON was surprised that day, and cast about for something to do. He strolled into his wife's boudoir, looking for letters for the afternoon post. He closed the blinds, saying that the sun would be too bright for the carpet. He then pulled them up again. He went behind a cloud, and Mrs. Middleton complained of the darkness. Then he discovered, that the springs were out of order, and that the springs didn't hold the carpet down. He pulled it up and down, with the utmost violence for some minutes, making a horrible noise.

Mrs. Middleton, fortunately, was away in the middle. She then rang for the butler, who was in the hall. He asked

necessity of care in dipping his pen when sitting at that particular writing-table was so very likely to be spurted over behind.

"It only wants a little care," he said. "The commonest care would prevent it."

The footman listened respectfully, holding his hand; but as he was innocent of writing in the drawing-room, Colonel Middlemiss did not fall upon his ear with that kind of eloquence which he was entitled to.

Pleased, however, with the sound of his voice, and having his hand well in, Mr. Weston now made some remarks on the neatness of the coal-scuttle, and had hints to offer on the scouring and same.

But no servant could stand before him for the neglected duties of a fellow-servant. The footman hastily reminded his master that the coal-scuttle, and scouring were not in his master's charge, and referred him to a certain "Ann," who was to prove the delinquent.

"Oh! please Rowley,
we you been tearing up?"

"Only notes that mig
go. I can't think why y
have been answered."

"But how do you know
I wish you would not do t
sulting me. I do believe yo
one I was just answering.

vancing to the table, and l
torn papers, "yes! that you h
to shreds. That is Lady L
was an invitation to go the
haven't a notion what day she
it is very tiresome!"

Colonel Middleton felt rath
quite know how to defend him

"Well, you will be the
Middleton, biting her lips to k
tion, "for you will lose your sho

Colonel Middleton was alw
to see his wife in a rage, and pr
vokingly indifferent; but the inci

very well to-day, or else you are
is nothing the matter with Totty."

"Oh yes, papa, there is!" she
sure there is! I don't think man
she would send for the doctor
please ask her to send for him?"

"Get up, my dear child, and
chair. I don't quite understand."

* Nina seated herself in the armchair
gan to pour out all that she
say.

Colonel Middleton saw, by her
the nervous twist of her hands,
much agitated, and got puzzled
sufficient cause.

"Did you come here to tell me?"
"Yes, papa."

"And why?"

"I thought you would ask me
the doctor."

Colonel Middleton looked much
"Oh, my dear, I never interfered
♦ and the nurses saw any occasion

ing to the coachman out riding
enormity?"

The child was incapable of any
shook her head.

"So you want to make me ~~to~~
I couldn't undertake to ~~mediate~~
really. It's not in my line."

"Oh, papa! I don't ~~want you~~
about me, only to try and ~~persuade~~
the doctor for Totty."

"But why—supposing, ~~for the~~
ment, that Totty was ill (~~which~~
you think you know better than
and the nurses? Why, in short,
the matter into your hands at all
you?"

"I love him so, papa!"

The words burst from ~~the girl~~
a cry. They seemed to escape ~~her~~
and she clasped her hair ~~in a~~
Her dark eyes glowed ~~deeply~~
to say how powerful to ~~she~~
~~her that~~

was very strongly marked. **Earnest** intensi
written on every line of hers, careless super
on his.

And in that moment the child rec
saw that what she felt he would never
what she comprehended so clearly he wou
never understand.

Swift as an arrow there shot into her
conviction that she was wasting her time and
ing her strength in vain; that she
make more impression on him than the
fall would make upon the shifting sand
next wave would efface altogether.
thought smote upon her, despair of his
heart; despair which would have been contempt, if her sore heart had had other feeling.

She turned away without a word, -
door behind her.

We need not follow the poor little
stairs, nor through the evening that followed
as night closed in, all her fears returned
doubled intensity. All hope of the Do

realised—Totty is taken ill; and
and the doctor is far away!

With a beating heart she sprang
crying, "Oh! why didn't they listen?
wouldn't they believe what I said?"

Vague ideas of running as she
and meadows to fetch him pass through
who would be so fleet as she?

There is no feeling of triumph
child's breast that the event has proved
and that she is justified in her forebodings,
only a deadly fear.

She gropes her way to the door,
every limb, and grasps the handle in
hand. It seems to resist, and she steams
and tries again. Still she cannot open it.
handle turns, but the door will not open.

"I must have bolted it by mistake," she
impatiently, and she pulls nervously at
bolt. All to no purpose; and the child
more and more agitated.

Suddenly a thought seems to dart
mind, and words to which she has hitherto

eaning flash clear across her brain. Her moth
ocked her in!

his, then, is the punishment of which s
! this the sure and certain means she h
ed to ensure compliance with her command
hen a mighty tempest passed over the soul
ild, and her very being seemed shaken
orce of the passions which stirred within h
ing herself upon her knees, she called aloud
fury and despair: "Mamma! mamma! I ha
I wish you were dead!" Crouching again
or, she hammered upon it with her hands
"Open the door! Open it, I say! Open
!"

oud clap of thunder was the answer, rattling
ckling over her head till the very room
to shake. It was a kind of relief to
t seemed to express all the wild feelings
ere raging in her heart—wrath, rebellion,
nd revenge.

ightning flashed into the darkness of
realing the little figure crouching by the

door. It played about her, and she felt no
flashed in her face, and she did not start or
The thunder hurled with her anathemas ~~at~~ ^{or} ga
mother, and she flashed upon her in ~~the~~ ma
with the lightning.

Down came the torrents of rain, ~~beating~~
the window as if the very doors of heaven
opening and the waters pouring out.

It was a fearful storm; but the tempest
without was as nothing compared with the
raging in the heart of the child. To her
of tears did not come. The fury of the
was spent, for the danger is over when
comes. Not so with the child. The storm's
fury was still raging, for the danger is not
the tears come.

And what is to bring them to her eyes?
eyes are hard and dry; the little heart
stone, and the hot parched lips have
softening in them. But is anything too
the Lord? He who smote the Stony Rock,
waters gushed out, and ran in the dry places
soften the stony heart; and "Rivers

"from mine eyes" will He make the proud

He who rides upon the whirlwind and dire
storm—who rebuked the raging of the win-
waves so that they ceased, and there was
calm—will direct the whirlwind of anger, a
o the surging waves of passion, "Peace!"

xhausted for a moment, the child lay qui-
here came into her mind, she knew not wh-
the memory of Mervyn kneeling by To-
le. Then the thought of the moonlight on
and the accents of Mervyn's voice.
n heaven," it seemed to repeat, "they all
ne, and you love so few. Sometimes I t
ll never understand . . ."
orgive us our trespasses," it said again,
ive them . . ."

na, why wouldn't you join with me? . . .
peace of the well-remembered scene,
ughts of love and heaven connected with
oon the child as she lay, like a cool
n a burning forehead; like oil on the

pestuous waters; like the chime
heard through the howling of the
wet night.

It seemed like a whisper from
something which she in her fury
sought to do with; which she was
afraid to look upon, or holy enough to un-

Opposed to the atmosphere of w.
in which she was now plunged, it
was such peace and love, and it seemed
as if Heaven itself could not seem holier,
than heaven, and heaven is peace and love
than heaven itself seem more far away!

Given up to all wicked feelings, she
lived as it were, cut off from heaven, with its
universal love, a prey to hatred and re-
pentance now to look from a distance on that
peace and purity. So do we picture to
ourselves the Lost looking from their Place of Dark
Heaven which might have been the

Struck with horror at the contrast,
she sought to escape from so terrible a condition
aloud in her desire to be saved

rvyn! Mervyn!" Thus do we ever seek
only comfort and support; flying ever first to
her man; forgetting that we have a friend
eth closer than a brother, and that He is

for all answer came into her mind agai
en-sent—the same words as before.

Forgive us our trespasses as we for
....

Nina, why would you not join with me?
I will! indeed I will!"

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive
trespass against us... Oh God! help me

I so wicked! Help me!...."

hen came a pause in the storm, both
without; and there was a calm. The s

eigned made a sound in the passage au

the child listened intently.

as it a voice? It was.... It

.... She listened intently again. The

ardly above a whisper, but the voice

"

"Mervyn!" she exclaimed; "oh I
you?"

"Yes, Nina, I've been here some
were never quiet a moment, and I
you hear."

"Oh, Mervyn," said Nina, "unlock

"Hush, Nina. I can't. The key
Listen to what I am going to say. T
come, and he is in Totty's room."

"Oh, thank God! thank God!" sh
and the glad relief of tears came at l
be all right now."

"Don't cry so, Nina dear. I will g
I can find out more. Keep quiet till I
And please don't cry."

No need to tell her to keep quiet.
storm-tempest has spent its fury, and
feelings have fled away, dispelled by the
of his voice. The tears came raining
he had left her, cooling the burning eye
and refreshing as a soft summer shower.
feelings came over her, feelings of repe

a, as she sat there, quiet, save for a little sigh now and then—waiting for the first sign of his return.

confusion in the house got greater; doors and shut, footsteps passed and re-passed; the little figure remained motionless as a nheeding and unmoved. A great calm had soon the soul of the child. The doctor was that she had so striven to bring about had accomplished; what she had so despaired of been brought to pass; the doctor was there. Wyn came back at last, whispering that he had out in the nothing; but that everybody was up or in Totty's room. Then he went away.

then, that could be done was being done, everyone's mind full of Totty. Her own in-
presence could be no great good. So she
was calm and content; satisfied, even thankful.
"Thank God," she whispered every now and
then that whisper was heartfelt prayer.

heart was thrilling with a nameless feeling,

half pride, half joy, that Totty^s
cognised as an object worthy the
tion of the whole household.
house is up," she repeated, hal
thinking about Totty."

A long time elapsed. Anx
creep into her heart again, wl
of a carriage driving away
and she started to her feet w
sudden chill at her heart.

"He is going because he
exclaimed, wringing her hands,
window. Her suspicion, alas!
when she caught sight of the ca
the distance; and from that mom

Then came the longing, so
before, to see him—if only for
with him, to hear his voice ag;
herself on her knees and sobbe
me! oh God! help me! By some
me to him and let me

Her face was hid
was deaf to any soun

did not hear the unlocking of the door, nor
some one had entered; till a hand was laid
on her shoulder, and a voice said "Come."

As something in her mother's white face and
hands that checked the words which trem-
bled in a dream, she rose and followed
the child's lips, and she answered her never
just as she was, in her little white night-
with her dark hair streaming.

In the room, she was conscious of the many
and presence of her father; but she seemed
no concern with anyone or anything but
She thought of nothing, saw nothing, but
everyone drew back to allow her to pass; and
oved on alone to the little white bed, where
ll little figure was lying. The world seemed
re, and to leave the brother and sister alone.

She knelt down by his side and
little hands.

"Totty," she whispered.

The blue eyes opened, and
over the colourless little face.

"Nina," he just managed
Nina."

And as she kissed him—h

count smile broke

breath kiss me,

CHAPTER

LADY WARDEN

been to
at once. I
at Grante
Such was
and the nex
study, writing
the evening
to one h
ents.

for he wanted to relieve his full heart out to his mother a recital of the sad last few days. "Her ladyship" conveyed him. He had not a notion of whom they were speaking. Slowly he opened the telegram, slowly he read the contents. But he did not understand it. He read it again, and then again, and again at it. Suddenly his colour deepened, his hand went up to his head as if to steady it, and to try to understand what he was doing. What did the telegram say?

By degrees the meaning dawned slightly. He gathered that she was coming, why, or how, or when, he could not comprehend.

"She is coming!" he said softly to himself. "She is coming here!"

Still he could not quite take it in, at once what those few words really meant.

"She is coming on Thursday," he said. "on Thursday morning. Thursday is a day off? To-day is . . . why?"

Magdalen *is* there; she *is* standing
if he only turns his head, he will *s*

No need for her to try and att
for fear of startling him; no need
her beating heart, and softly to
name! He was conscious of her
—knew the very rustle of her gow
of her light footfall—*felt* she was t
his eyes with his hand before he
her, as if he feared to be dazzle
what he had so longed for.

Then, too, suddenly, came
misgiving. Would she be change
be some alteration? Would it be
he remembered — whose picture
painting all the time?

But when he really *saw* the
his glance rested on the well-kn
the familiar smile—when he met t
shining and glowing with love
doubts and fears vanished. He th
with a glad cry, and went straig
without a word. Nor did he fin

daughter, and painted a vivid pic-
lessness of the Granton atmospher
had suffered from it.

His mother drew him to her,
these things, softly whispering, "It
and Mervyn put his head on her
delicious feeling of security and
mind was more full of the recent e-
own byegone troubles, and he ret-
ject of Nina.

"I have not seen her this m-
cluded. "I peeped into her room,
asleep."

"Is no one with her?" asked
"Has not your aunt been to her?"
"She never goes into Nina's ro-
her? not even the nurse or govern-

"Oh no, mother! I don't think
it; she is not very . . . not exactly
and governess, you see. I think
afraid to go to her."

mother's return. He half hoped to
and as he went along he had deb
self whether he would not wake her.
But when he stood by her bed
changed. She looked so pale and
he was quite selfish to be glad
while she was so unhappy. His br
when his eyes fell upon her face.
that she would wake to the memo
deep as his joy; and he felt that
be cruel to rouse her from her quiet
pale and ill though she looked, :
quietly the sleep of thorough exhaustion
time she had forgotten her trouble
she would remember them directl
he could do or say could comf
quiet sleep she was enjoying. W
for her, loving and willing as he
sciousness could do?

What would *we* do for our
God giveth His belovèd—s

So he sat quietly down by her side
should wake up herself. He did n

nervous fancies, from sickness,
again need she wrestle wildly
fear and dread. The ghost w
laid for ever, and the worst i
again need she chafe at the fee
looked and despised. The little
white lamb now, safe in the Sh
ewe lamb lying for ever and ev
his Saviour, above. Never aga
beat wildly, and her jealous indi
because *he* is not summoned t
sence when the guests are assen
more highly exalted now! In hi
for ever and ever, and the shi
What recks he now, that his kn
his limbs powerless and weak?

No thought of self mingled
feelings. Long ago Nina's self l
Totty; and in her love for him she

So quietly, and almost happily
found Mervyn sitting by her bed.
"Mervyn!" she said, softly.

A more experienced person have taken alarm at her appearance, her hands in his, and said,

"I was afraid of being selfish."

"Tell me all about it," she said, as she tightened her hold on him. "I am too tired and too giddy to ask you many questions now. I want so much to hear."

Mervyn instantly poured forth his thoughts, and she listened with an excited interest.

"In thy presence is the fullness of life," he whispered, when he had finished. "Is there no heaven now?"

Her lips quivered as she put her arms round his neck. "Oh no, Nina darling!" he said, impulsively, throwing his arms round her. "How can I be quite happy when you are not here? If I have got my heaven, you have got your hell."

The pain of her loss, the terrible void in her life, smote upon Nina. She gave way to a burst of bitter tears. Clinging to Mervyn, she begged him to take her back, for she had no one left to love her.

changed; all the decision had gone out
voice shook when she tried to speak, :
she held out trembled all over. In or
the work had been done. The st
self-willed Mrs. Middleton, had bec
nerved, broken-down woman. A strc
had met and overcome her; had ta
armour in which she trusted, and la
less and defeated in the dust. She
we said before, lost a child, or conc
sibility of such a thing. But neverth
of Terrors had entered her stronghold
of her and of her will, had taken aw

In the silent watches of the nigh
forced to recognise a will stronger t
a strength greater, a Power before
bow. Nor had she known how to s
From the moment when, roused b
had rushed to the nursery and fo
broken a blood-vessel, all her pow
had fled. Utterly unnerved, con
every maid in the house had bee
than she.

only felt that the child who co-
tower of strength. The very thou-
eyes and the firm little mouth had
Vividly she had remembered the
the bedroom-nursery, when the
been lulled to sleep, and her ow-
by the calm influence of the gi-
power. She had felt it might he
had felt she must have it at any i-
knew the price must be her own
felt she must fetch the girl, thou-
hand but hers could set the pri-
must reverse her own decree, hers
the punishment she had devised
was one step further into the Valle

but she had hardly seemed to care
She was a vanquished woma-
matter?

So, while all were occupied
had stolen away to Nina's room.
to find the child asleep; had turn-
softly, and entered gently, for fea-

morning, and his trivial talking
plan it would entail, had driven
seen how little the loss personal
every word he had let fall ha
She had felt as if no one but N
cared for the child at all. And
send for her, dared not go to ha
pride—poor woman, she was h
now—it was positively from fear.

Such was the state of mind
found her when she entered the

Her gentle words of sympathy
ton break down at first; but it
seemed a relief to her to give
poor little fellow's sudden illness

There was silence between
cital was over.

“Magdalen,” said Mrs. Mid
denly, at last, “have you seen
since you came?”

“Only Mervyn, dear Lydia.”

“Did he mention any of them
Edmund?”

been very severe with her. More unhappy than the thwarting and the severity were connected . . . my poor little boy. And now I feel I would hate me. I know she is one of us who must either love or hate; and I know she will love me. So I am afraid . . . yes, afraid to see her. I could not—my heart was sad and sore—see hatred in the eyes of my child. Eyes," she added, half to herself, "look so different. I could not be triumphant over, despised"

"Oh, hush! dear, hush!" said Mrs. Middleton, shocked. "Indeed, Lydia, I do not know what you are saying. The girl is stupefied with grief. It seems to me leave her alone. Won't you come and see?"

"No, no," said Mrs. Middleton; "indeed I cannot. Besides, I am sure like it. You don't understand her. How should you? You and Mrs. Menier are different."

Dear Lydia," remonstrated Mrs.

Mervyn had been like him, *you* wouldn't have all this? I mean even if you had had children, stronger and finer than him?"

"God forbid, dear," said Magdalen, without knowing what the girl was driving at. "Do you mean that the weakest and least prosperous child is always the one a mother holds most dear?"

"She never did," exclaimed Nina.

"Who, dear?" asked Magdalen, bewildered.

"Mamma!" she cried; "she despised him, was ashamed of him; I don't believe she is sorry he is dead."

Magdalen was inexpressibly shocked. The contrast between the mother and daughter seemed more hopeless than she had expected. She was also bewildered, too. Coming fresh from Mrs. Middleton's in the abandonment of her grief, the girl's present seeming so contradictory. She could not understand how it was that all might be set right between them. But the most prominent idea in her mind was that the state should be put before Mrs. Middleton at once. She was quite sure that the child was much stronger than she was.

don't think you ought to lose a moment in going to see her."

Her gentle womanly heart smote her as she uttered the words; but foreign as it was to her nature to inflict pain, she felt in this instance that it was the only thing to be done. But she was not prepared for the effect of her words on Mrs. Middleton.

"Ill!" she cried, starting to her feet, and hastily throwing a shawl over her shoulders. "She is dying, Magdalen! I see it in your face. Oh, my God! am I to lose two children in one day? Take me to her. Oh Magdalen, take me quickly."

And she put her hand on her sister-in-law's shoulder for support.

Magdalen answered gently: "Believe me, Lydia, no. She is not so bad as that. Only ill enough to require a mother's care and attention."

"She shall have both," exclaimed Mrs. Middleton. "I would lay down my life for her. I will do anything and everything I can to . . ."

As she was speaking, the door slowly opened and Mervyn entered, leading *Nina by the hand*.

Very quietly Magdalen led Mervyn away,
closed the door behind her.

So no eye but God's saw the meeting bet
mother and daughter.

not encourage her to pursue the ^{conversation, so} she did not continue it. **She merely** ^{remarked that} Lord Wardlaw would join **them at** ^{Glen-Mervyn at} soon as he was able, but **that she did not know** when that would be; and **then she wished** the boy a fond good-night, and begged **him** to get to bed as quickly as possible, so as to **have** a good sleep after the exciting events of the ^{very anxious} day. They had both, certainly, been through a ~~good~~ deal of agitation. Nina, after the meeting ^{with her mother,} had broken down altogether, and the doctor, on his arrival, had declared her to be ^{whole nervous sys-} state. She had never left ~~he~~ ^{physical strength} she had first been laid. The had seemed unstrung, and ~~he~~ ^{had become} exhausted. She had got a ch ^{ill, too, and} evening had become feverish ^{want} and disposed to wander. The doctor's orders that she should be kept perfectly quiet, and not confused by the sight of different faces, were most str ^{ictly} ^{and the house key} children were to be sent away ^{as free of noise and bustle as possible} Under these circumstances Lady Wardlaw had

had daily telegrams and letters from Granton, which were on the whole more cheering than others. Magdalen also had satisfactory accounts from her husband of the progress of his affairs in London, and he seemed likely to be able to get away sooner than he had expected. These letters were not shared with Mervyn. He had never mentioned his step-father, nor made any enquiry about him. Whether it was from perversity, or sheer forgetfulness, Magdalen could not determine. She knew well Mervyn's power of putting from him subjects that were disagreeable or painful, and she feared sometimes that he had really succeeded in shutting out altogether the fact of Lord Wardlaw's existence. Had it not been that the boy had gone through so much lately, she would have questioned him about it; but he was at times, in spite of their re-union, so cast down and out of spirits, that she did not like to force unwelcome topics upon him. He was sometimes filled with compunction for having left Nina just when she seemed to need him most; he never could speak of Totty without tears; and his anxiety over the telegrams and letters was intense.

spring out of bed with a shout, at the thought that he was really back at Glen-Mervyn. Back at Glen-Mervyn! Back among the much-loved scenes and the familiar surroundings! Back, with his mother at his side, to be parted from her no more!

When he went down-stairs and found her sitting in her usual place at the breakfast-table, he felt as if he had never been away, and as if the last three months had been part of a hideous dream which had disappeared like a ghost at cock-crow. How delightful it was to revisit all the familiar scenes with his mother; to take her to the gate where they had parted, and to feel that all was over. How delightful, later in the day, to pay a visit with her to the Vicarage, and to feel so independent of Gwen and her tactless speeches; to have no concern with the prim little parlour and the stuffed birds; to wander home in the autumn sunset talking it all over, the words tumbling out unrestrainedly as of old, instead of having to write and spell them.

"Oh mother!" he exclaimed suddenly, "I feel

"No," he answered; "I did not interest in them."

"Who did we chiefly talk of and in?" she asked. "Ourselves, I suppose rather unwillingly.

"There is one difference in you that already," she went on. "Your sympathies enlarged, and the range of your existence. We were very happy together here, no and I, but perhaps there was a danger of being selfish; so our isolated happiness came to a close, and we were sent out into the world to form new interests, and to have our sympathies drawn out. Do not for a moment suppose that I think you love me less because others more. I know you don't. But I do see in you, for all the changes you have seen, a difference I am glad and thankful to see. For I was a little frightened when you talked of 'you and I' as if 'you and I' were the only two people in the world, and as if there were no world at all. Glen-Mervyn. But now it is different, and I tell you how glad I am that it should be so."

Mervyn, as he walked by his mother and mind full of Nina.

"So you feel no interest in any Glen-Mervyn?" she said presently, continued silent.

He looked up, smiling brightly. "ways right, mother," he said. "Is the in you too, for the changes you h asked after a few minutes. "Have y now outside Glen-Mervyn?"

He put the question rather anxiously up into her face.

"Mervyn," she said—and it was not heard what he had said, for her ing away over the fields—"just g the telegraph boy is coming to the h he want to be paid, or what?"

Mervyn went off, and came back another telegram in his hand.

"There were two," he said. ran off so quick, he had not time

He handed it to his mother, while she read it. Somehow, the

"Mervyn," she said, putting shoulder, "do you remember our that summer night?"

"Yes, mother."

But the answer came in rather voice.

"Have you often thought it over?"
"No, mother."

Magdalen glanced at him quickly passed over her face.

"You don't mean to say you object from you, Mervyn, after all these Mervyn nodded.

"I was half afraid of this, from you is a fatal habit of yours, Mervyn. I disappointed."

Mervyn hung his head, without a

"This cannot go on," she said, very sooner you turn your thoughts to the better; for you see he is coming to-mor

"Who?" said Mervyn, perversely. She hesitated a minute, and then father."

But now! . . . Now what w
tion of the husband she lov
and soul; the man who in a f
flooded her life with sunshine,
her the grace and glory of Y
radiated her present and her fu
past had never known; and h
and disappointments of the mo
be lost in the full completeness
happiness! And Magdalen w
thought.

"Am I getting selfish?" she as
piness ought not to make me l
and feel for others. Can my n
me?"

But she knew it was not so.
who had restored to her the idea
of her girlhood had done not only
more. He had also restored to
human nature, and her belief in
by bringing before her a living
natural goodness can be, exalted
and the contact with such a chara

CHAPTER XII.

Meeting of Lord Wardlaw and Mervyn Lynn.

THE next morning's letter about it was
satisfactory as possible. The worst was
she had now only to get up her strength
here,"

"I wish she could come here,
"she would be so happy with us, mother."

"I hope she will come when she is
Lady Wardlaw answered; "but I suppose
if your Aunt Lydia will ever make up
part with her."

A short conversation on the subject
then Mervyn got ready to go as usual
at the Vicarage. As he sped along
autumn woods his thoughts were given
every subject but the impending
completely escaped his memory.
warm welcome from the vicar, who
his pleasure at having him to teach

sitting in the fire-light, waiting.
Clinging to the branch of
showered down golden leaves
gave to it, he swung himself
the window, his eager eyes
loved figure in its accustomed
long pause and a long silence
was audible in the stillness th
ing of distant dogs, the low
and the distant voices of peo
their way home. But no neare

An old white owl, who ha
her seat on the tree by the su
branches, peered down upon
an upper branch, as if wond
that sat so very still. The si
last by a low sob, and the h
“She doesn’t want me; I needn
to give her her tea.”

There was a rustle among t
shower of golden leaves from th
watcher dropped from his seat,
the gathering darkness.

be consoled by her soothing kisses, ~~and~~
ances that he was very much wanted
that both she and Lord Wardlaw
pecting him every moment, and we
could have become of him.

"Now, darling," she said gently,
"brush your hair and run down.
Charlie anxiously expecting you."

"Ain't you coming, mother?" ~~said M~~
blankly.

"No, dear," she answered, ~~quietly~~;
to dress. We dine earlier ~~tonight~~.
you are not going to persuade ~~your~~
shy!"

Mervyn laughed a little ~~at~~ ^{the i} shy; and Magdalen, anxious to ~~keep h~~
~~ful vein, talked on to him gail~~ ^{all th} washing his hands and brushi ^{g his t} up her
quite sure he and Lord Ward ^{up her} without her, and had made ^{She} them to themselves at first ^{his position}
boy's sociable and genial ~~a~~
would make friends directly.

And he looked eagerly up his face, with flushed cheeks and gl

Lord Wardlaw took both his hands, and returned the gaze with never turned towards the gun; on the boy's face, and he made

The past came rushing before him, the likeness of feature and countenance indescribable resemblance of voice and expression in the eyes, took him back twenty years, and he seemed to be looking into the face of Magdalen Middleton as it was the first time he had seen her.

It reminded him so forcibly of the accident, riding in the Park, when, after their introduction, his horse had started, and, as it recovered itself, she said to him, "I hope it is not hurt!"

It was the very same face, the very same manner, the very same words. He tried straight back to that day, as far as he was about to answer as he had

THROWN TOGETHER
know I ought not to have touched
tempting."

Lord Wardlaw put his disengaged eyes, and tried to clear away turn to the present. The sublime and are ever ready to meet and mingle of humour suddenly showed him that might be put upon his behaviour in this, the beginning of their acquaintance, that he was a harsh and unforgiving old ogre, in fact. It struck him that he should play a part so foreign to his nature, that he laughed, and with that bygone years cleared away.

"Never mind the gun, my dear," said he. "I daresay there is no harm done." "Oh! but do let me see," said he, and greatly relieved; "it would be a magnificent breech-loader, I assure you!"

Smiling at his eagerness, Lord Wardlaw sat down, and examined the gun sitting on the top of the packing-case.

and he was perhaps a little dread
the boy in the full glare of the li
his eyes should detect in him some
his father, and so destroy the favo
the child was making on him. []
every moment as he talked trace
sentiments, tastes, and opinions,
to feel the boy would become v
and he wanted to forget everythin
duce a contrary feeling. However
as Mervyn requested, carried the
ing-room, and laid it on the hea
cast an anxious look at his step
re-assured when his eye fell on
and beaming face. There was
to anyone but Magdalen, and Le
a long breath of relief.

Standing on the hearth-rug wi
fire, he looked down admiringly
ing over the gun, and went on t
“Do you understand it now?”
brief explanation.

“Quite,” answered Merv

"Mother," answered Mervyn, his voice softening.

"Whose mother?" asked Lord Wardlaw, sentily.

"Mine," answered Mervyn, in a tone of proud appropriation.

Lord Wardlaw still looked a little dazed; suddenly recollecting himself, he said: "Yes, I did not understand you, sir. I did not understand your meaning of Magdalen."

Lord Wardlaw's voice softened again, and he pronounced his wife's name, and then sharply. For there was in the tone of his voice a note of proud appropriation that had been born of his own. It might have been its echo.

And at that moment she entered the room, dressed for dinner. Lord Wardlaw advanced to meet her, unconsciously coming up to her side. She was in the act of doing this when the three laughed; but Mervyn's laugh was the soonest, and he brushed past her. She went and stood by his mother's side.

love and enjoy his step-father ex-
she was concerned; be perfect
her, but feel differently in her pro-
contretemps about the chair ga-
how matters would be. Mervy
care for her and monopolise h
resent Lord Wardlaw's interferen
as she wondered how it would
that she fell to thinking what
theirs was. How curious it all w
thing life was! What an odd his
How strange it was that Charl
by a curious chain of circumsta
were, in Mr. Lyndsay's home.
scene had the walls of this
down. As she thought of that
ago, she wondered how she ev
it. What a life for a girl to lead
to turn her thoughts that way
while she was living out day
monotonous routine, incarcerated
Charlie had been living out
and chafing against her, again

herself that it was that early trial to make it what it now was. The same character which had at first him, she could not but own that and matured under the influence c It might have been that, in a sp happy, something of depth and been wanting, and God, by givir had developed the want and suppl result was a character at once rar For he was not, as many would : the like circumstances, a soured Far from it. He had borne his life tained through it all a natural sw and power of enjoyment; the fre and the charm of youth; the aln and keenness in both his amusen cupations.

Still his character bore inafface early disappointment, giving the n depth, and reality.

"So it has been for the best, after out loud; and as she spoke he car

Lean^{ing} back in her chair, a
two she loved so dearly rapidly
timacy, her doubts and fears va
told her that all would be well.

never found it out—been a warm companion with kindred tastes a mother's interest and sympathy is keen as they had always been, when he grew older, a little forced—looker-on. She could enjoy them, she could not always join in the one ever ready to share in them, zest and unflagging zeal as himself.

Lord Wardlaw, on his side, feels his first introduction to temporarily awakened, and daily new quality to love and admire.

So far all went well. But Wardlaw in any way came before his mother, the moment he interdegree with what Mervyn considers rights, that moment all was changed.

It might be only that he had that he mounted her on her horse a flower from the conservatory was enough to set the boy's blood in a glow, and to make him dignation, and to make him

front, bounded over it. Lord War example, and then turned to assis

Magdalen, in getting over it, tangled in her gown; and if Lord been close at hand, she must hav

Mervyn, looking hastily rou position of affairs, and was pr self for not having been as atte father.

"It is an awkward gate for Wardlaw. "I think a step migl side of the third bar, to make Don't you, Magdalen?"

"I think it would be a very answered, "and very easily done

"It had better be done at on husband, "as we so often com speak about it."

A sudden insane feeling c Wardlaw's interference came ove

"It's always been like that,' "it does very well."

he had received from his mother he muttered again, passionately holding her hands; "how dare he make such a speech?" She was never angry with me.

He did not go home till he had been there half an hour. No notice was taken of him, nor was he treated exactly as if nothing had happened. Not only in his mother's eyes he was still the same grave shadow, and it made

A fresh turn, however, was given to the situation by his mother's announcement that she had written to say Nina would come to stay with Mervyn in a few days.

For the next day or two she remained at home, for her comfort and enjoyment, and accepted the change with pleasure, and enjoyed the company of Nina's presence. Nina's presence would divert him from himself, by giving him a good time, and care.

On the morning of her expected arrival, before starting for the Vicarage, he intended to have a little garden party. He was to have his cousin, close to his own,

Mervyn stood in front of downcast eyes, his violets in his hand. He had not offer to take them. He had been raising his head, he burst out parting words.

"Why does he always interfere?"

Lady Wardlaw made no answer, turned away to the window, and stood looking out.

"Mother," pleaded Mervyn, holding out his violets, "please let me have them."

"No, dear," she answered gently, "I cannot take them now."

"Why not?" burst out Mervyn.

"They would give me no pleasure; they would only remind me of what I fear is fast becoming."

"What?" asked Mervyn hopefully, "I am afraid to hear the end of the story."

"Selfish," she answered, "you are entirely selfish."

"I can't help it," cried Mervyn, "it is my fault. I was never like this before."

listlessly, as unlike his eagles.

The vicar noticed her
tive, but he asked no question.
Mervyn thus once or twice
little at the reason. He seemed
his mother had named, and
with him; but he found him
that he thought it best to leave
off half-way to visit some of

Left to himself, Mervyn was
thoroughly wretched and
with himself, and displeased.
He dawdled along, anxious
possible, his return home,
and was getting absently over
struck against some unwonted

“What in the world is it?
And he stooped down to see.

The ledge!—the step Lord
of!—the step he, in his wrath,
never be put on. His smooth

as she sat there with her hands
the fire. Thoughts of their lack
help he had been to her, of the
consciously done her. Absence
had intensified her feelings.
had grown to look upon him
messenger of peace and goodness
the part of a guiding-star in her
by the light of a bright example
holier things. He reminded her
was so interwoven with every
past. He would be for ever a
in her mind with her little dead
the memories she held so sadly
had, shrinking, heard Totty's death
in her ears, it was Mervyn who
supported her. In that terrible
night of the storm, it was the
the sound of his voice, that had
brought her to a better state of
woke the morning after her life
she had found Mervyn watching
in his unselfishness to hide him.

established her by the time he waited, to engage her in conversation; her eyes wandered every moment seemed to be listening to her.

The door opened rather suddenly and the girl started and gasped. It was only Lord Wardlaw.

"Mervyn is late," he said. "I suppose you have been here by this time. I suppose you have come and meet him, Nina, this afternoon."

Nina looked so unfeignedly surprised that Magdalen had no difficulty in persuading her to come and sent for her things. Let me help you up carefully, and promise to take care of you if you are tired.

"This fine mountain air will do you good, I hope," he said. He opened the hall-door. They stood looking out at the autumn sunset; and Nina's eyes were filled with wonder at the beauty of the scene. She could not define exactly what it was that appealed to her, but the warm glow of the setting sun,

"He doesn't hurry h
never knew Mervyn walk
doesn't see us yet. He w
first, as I think I hide you
side. Why, how languidly
generally bounds along."

Nina's heart beat quic
graceful figure approach; v
her old characteristics, she
away and hide herself.

Mervyn, when he did a
step-father, stopped short, a
did not see who was sitting
took it for granted it must b
seized with a feeling of guilt
of what he had just done. T
till that moment, how wrongl
but now conscience told him
dread his mother going on to
the havoc he had made.

Suddenly, he recognised
figure in its deep mourning,
upon it the traces of sickness

over him; and then, in his old impetuosity, dashed forward, calling out as he saw Nina!"

Nina started from her seat, and was about to meet him, all her shyness having fled at the sound of his voice.

Lord Wardlaw felt a little nervous at the impetuous advance, fearing his step-sister had not yet recovered from the illness she had suffered, and that she might be knocked over; little knowing how noisy and boisterous an old man he was. He had given her the best medicines the poor child could take, and when, the meeting over, the children entwined themselves together, and happy faces came close together, in conversation, he realised that there was no need for his presence, and no need to smile, left them together, and went to his wife.

lowed his every movement with an evident delight. Magdalen fancied a day spent with her cousin would be a satisfaction to make her feel more at home. So she told Lord Wardlaw that they should ride to a neighbour's house at a great distance, leaving Mervyn in charge of the home. A holiday was to be given him; and the arrangement gave satisfaction to both parties. So all the next day the two were alone, as in the old days.

Bit by bit, Nina told Mervyn of the happy state of things at home; of the happy state of things and her mother; and of how different things were now. She was getting quite fond of Edmund, and Edmund had become a very good boy. Cecily, too, had grown sensible, and used to sit in her room and get her anything she wanted.

Mademoiselle, who had come now that she didn't mind the leave of her headaches, and really wanted to answer.

to love everybody, and how much easier it makes everything. And it *does* make us happier. If I were to hear that sort of talk about happy homes, and the love of children, brothers and sisters, I should like it much better now. I feel it is all Mervyn. For if you had never come here I should never have known what he meant. You were always nice and attentive to everyone, and made people feel at home wherever you went. I am always going to try to be like you, and am going to try my best.

"Oh stop, stop! Nina," exclaimed science-stricken Mervyn, jumping up in a fit of scarlet, "you don't know what I really mean. I don't deserve to be here. I don't."

Nina looked at him in surprise. She remembered that on a former occasion when she had praised him, he had blushed in shame. That a certain reserve had crept into his manner since she had not been able to account for it, and she had not been able to account for it either then what the flaw could be.

in that moment to believe, as many believed before her, to their infinite trouble, that it *was* wrong after all to tensely, and to expend so much affectionate beings; that it was, in fact, to worship more than the Creator; that such love into idolatry, and brought a host of train. The child would have been the words of a writer of the present one ever loved child, parent, or sibling. It is not the intensity of affection, difference with truth or duty, that made Love was given, sanctioned, and ended that *self might be annulled.*" Some sense and meaning came to her. She tried in her own mind to excuse by accusing herself, and turning back to her little dead brother; sought love for him, such flaw had not was no use. Her innate truthfulness over her wish to screen Mervyn; but own to herself that she would who rendered the little boy tend-

would only remind me that my boy
I fear his affection for me is fast lost.

And the scales fell from his eyes.

"I'll never be like that again,
petuously. "I see it all now. I saw
mother as unselfishly as you loved
not mind who did all the things
they were done. Now should I?"

"Perhaps not," said Nina, softly.

Mervyn's demeanour to his stepbrother
ing was very marked. Twice he
when about to do some little service
because he saw Lord Wardlaw on
it. He went to bed happy, and
tions. But he quite forgot to m
about the gate!

"What a number of shooting
have been lately," said Magdalene,
at breakfast, putting down the paper.
third I have seen in a fortnight.
Mervyn, please be careful."

him; "bear in mind my warning & cidents."

"No fear with only one gu smiling, as he leant against the w his cigar; "I shan't be late to-day to do any good after half-past Nina. Where's Mervyn?"

Mervyn soon appeared, and Magdalen and Nina watching th dow. A pretty sight, altogether. man, with his gun on his shoulder bounding along by his side; th dogs behind. At any rate the thought so, looking at them with

Just as they disappeared she up at his step-father, and Lord arm round the boy's shoulder, a sigh of pleasure from the wind

The morning passed pleasant after luncheon Magdalen and drive. There was a good deal and they were detained there

wondering why her uncle and cc
It rendered her unable to tal
thinking she was tired, took up
to read. Nina leaned back
watched her. How calm she lo
she was reading her book, and
seemed in it. Nina sighed, an
be as calm, and not worry her
fears. It gave her strength, he
that it was but nervousness on
there was nothing really to be a

"I will not let myself get fus
half-past five."

Twenty minutes past five, five
past five; still no sound of
heart began to beat again, but a
face opposite quieted her. Still
wishing the room were not quit
It made everything feel so like
not like to think it was so lat
be doing? Why should *both* be
possible Lord Wardlaw could h
hour. Why did he promise

"Oh, it's nothing, nothing, a
said, still trying to hide her face
so silly. Since that dreadful
frightens me, and . . . and . . .

Just then the clock struck
Nina started.

"Are you frightened because
home?" said Magdalen, tenderly.
be, dear, really. Mervyn is a
and Charlie is often much later

"But he said . . ." began Ni

"He certainly said he would
early; but he was shooting at
day, and would have a long walk
off. He would be sure to shoot
don't you see? I don't think he
now, I assure you, dear. He must
way off all day, for we have
shot. Generally there is popping
all the time he is out."

Comforted a little, Nina la
again.

THROWN TOGETHER

"It is all right, dear," Mag
her voice sounded rather stra
letting off his gun before he co
He will soon be here now."

"But that other sound," Ni
self, so faintly that the words w

"What?" said Magdalen, sh
"Oh nothing, nothing," sa
"Let us shut the window, Aunt
cold."

So they returned into the v
lamp-light fell upon their fac
paler than ever, and a look o
had not been there before.

She sat down again with he
not reading it now; and Nin
fire, pretending to warm herse
keep her back to Magdalen an
eye.

What is it that has brought
on Magdalen's calm face? Wha
dread that has risen in her bre

after her illness. But she ought to time, in front of that roaring fire. .

What a curious thing attitude w so much sometimes! What did i crouching attitude express?

What if Nina *had* heard it to ask her?

But the mother's heart failed h ask, lest she should hear from the confirmation of her own terrible sus had heard it, it could not be fancy

She would wait five minutes m if they had not arrived, she wo girl.

In the meanwhile she tried to it had not been Mervyn's voice. passing, either shouting to another the sound of the gun.

In vain! The mother *could* no she was mistaken; knew in her hea boy's voice; the voice she loved so that had been the music of her many years!

"You are a brave little thing, Nina," she said, taking the icy hands in hers; "but you need not put a strain upon yourself any longer. Sit down, and tell me all about it. You need not be afraid for me. We will bear it together."

Nina sank down, sobbing, on the floor, and her head against Magdalen's knee. Magdalen bent down and kissed her without speaking.

"It is hard you should have new troubles, poor child," she said, faintly, after a pause; and as she spoke she clasped her hands tightly together. "We won't question you darling, for we both know what we heard. But we won't give up hope yet. It may be that . . . it . . . was averted just in time. In that case they will be here directly. We will wait patiently for ten minutes longer, and then if they have not come . . . we must send to see what has happened. Do not speak, dear; there is no need to answer. Only pray."

Her bowed head sank upon her clasped hands, her lips just touching the girl's pale brow. A silence reigned in the room; no sound broke the solemn stillness; no sound of lamentation from

CHAPTER XV.

The Footsteps on the dead Leaves.

MERVYN bounded along by his step-father's side after leaving Glen-Mervyn, full of spirits. His good resolutions had strengthened, and his conscience was at rest.

He chatted on, on all sorts of subjects, till he came to the spot where their roads diverged.

"Could I not meet you somewhere on the back this afternoon," he said, turning his face up to his companion, "so that we might go home together?"

Lord Wardlaw put his arm affectionately round the boy as he answered, "Certainly, my dear. Let me see. What shall we make our tryst? Suppose we say the old gate? I shall have time to come after I leave off shooting, so suppose I shall be there till a quarter past."

anxious to arrive there first, he did not wait about in the dark too soon, and to have to wait about in the dark till Mr. Hughes remarked it was a dark evening.

He stayed chatting to the vicar for some time, and to have to wait about in the dark till Mr. Hughes remarked it was a dark evening. He thought he had better start. "I could find my way home blindfold," said Mervyn, "so it does not make much difference."

However, he jumped up, and on glancing at the clock he was surprised to find that it was very late. It was time for Lord Wardlaw to be at the trysting-place.

"If I run all the way, I shall just catch him," said the vicar good-night.

He was surprised, when he got out of the vicarage, to find how very dark it was. There were stars, and he could only just see his way. As he had said, no difficulty to him, knowing every step of the way; but he began to puzzle.

"He will never find the gate," he said to himself; "it is a good thing I am here to show him where it is."

He stopped for a minute to hear if the

THROWN TOGETHER.

"Stop!" Mervyn called out. "Halloa! stop a minute!"

It might have been the loud tones of his own song that prevented Lord Wardlaw hearing; or, if the sound *did* reach his ears, he must have thought it was some boy passing by and calling to another, for he did not pause or answer; and Mervyn only heard the receding footsteps, and the song getting fainter in the distance—

But I had my task to finish,
And she had gone home to rest.

"He must be nearly at the gate now," thought Mervyn. "I shall never get up to him." Hardly had the thought passed through his mind when it was succeeded by another, which made him stop short and exclaim, "Good gracious!"

Quick as lightning came the thought that Lord Wardlaw in the darkness would not perceive the change on the gate, and, expecting a step where there was none, would most likely lose his footing in vaulting over it, and get a very disagreeable fall. To make it worse, he had his gun with him, and it

Mervyn's faint cries were unheard. And now the gate must be close at hand. Breathless and despairing there burst from the boy's lips the wild piercing cry, "Father! father!"

For one happy moment he fancied there was a pause, and he strained every nerve and tore along at lightning speed. But if the word did reach Lord Wardlaw's ears it was, unhappily, too unfamiliar for him to suppose it could apply to him, and Mervyn's pricking conscience told him it was so.

To his dismay, the song burst out afresh, and the firm footsteps on the crackling leaves increased in speed, as if nearing the end of their journey. Presently, voice and footsteps stopped. . . .

The darkness was broken by a sudden flash of light, and simultaneously with a crash and a heavy fall there rang out into the silence the sounds which, penetrating far and wide, reached even to the open window at Glen-Mervyn—the loud explosion of a gun, followed by an agonised cry in a boy's voice.

How the boy got there he never could
wards tell; how he reached the gate, how he cl
over it, he never knew; how he knelt down, b
dared kneel down by the motionless figure as
he never could imagine, he never could b
think.

Frozen with horror, stupefied with grief,
for a time deprived of sense or motion. The
the darkness, the loneliness, the impossib
doing anything, the horror of the whole thi
prived him of the power to act, to think,
Help he must have, human aid and succou
munion with some living thing, or he will
But, in that wild secluded spot, how is
found? His fainting heart reminds him o
gone by, when in sport he hid himself
lonely place, and saw no passer-by from
nightfall. It was horrible, horrible, to be
the darkness with the dead. If he could li
voice and call, if his frozen tongue could
its office, even then, who would hear? WI
catch the sound of his cry, and bear it on
wards his home? No one!

Presently it seems to him so long since it happened, so long since the time he started to Glen-Mervyn, his step-father in health by his side, the keeper and the dogs behind. That could have been this morning. Oh no, a long time ago. His step-father has been lying there many years now, and he, for years—or all his life long, he—has been sitting silent, alone in the darkness with the dead.

Why should Thought at that moment resume her sway? Hitherto he has been too bewildered to collect his ideas; but now, for a moment, from the darkness around him, brings clear tableaux before him, and gives them he must, whether he will or no. The tableaux—the past, the present, and the future.

Puts before him first the picture of a happy home. Lifelike and distinct moving figures, just as he saw them last.

Shifts the tableau, and shows him its brightness and its joy are flown. Fills him the sudden conviction that, through a sionate act of selfish rebellion, he has

"Going," he muttered, "going far away; never to come back any more."

All that he was leaving, all that he was losing, came rushing over his soul like a whirlwind, and a sob burst from his aching heart.

"Mother!" he cried, holding out his hands in the darkness, "I shall never see you again! Oh, mother! good-bye! good-bye!"

But he could not leave her like this. He must find some way to tell her of how it had all come about; of all he had meant to do; of his contrition and his firm resolutions.

"I have a message to send her," he said, sobbing, unconsciously using the words of the fatal song; "and send it I must and will."

But the echoes will not take it, cruel and unforgiving as they are! Help and succour have throughout been wanting; messengers, then, are far away.

Oh, what was the nearest human habitation? What was the last human voice that fell upon his ear? His puzzled brain refused to remember; his fainting heart told him it was days and days ago.

THROWN TOGETHER.

friend. I have a message to send her, and no one can give it but you. I meant to tell you what I had done. I tried all I could to overtake you. Oh, why did you go so quick? You will tell her all this in her dreams, and you will forgive me, I know. And tell her too, that I loved you, and called you 'father' at last." . . .

Suddenly the boy paused, and starting, listened intently. A vague feeling of electric hope thrilled through his heart, and he bent over the figure again. There was a slight rustle of the dead leaves, and a deep-drawn sigh. Bending closer and closer, he heard the sigh repeated, and a faint voice say, "Be comforted, my child; I am not much hurt!"

THROWN TOGETHER.

"I consider you my preserver," he said, laughing.
 ing, "for what should I do now if you ~~had~~ not pursued me so perseveringly. I should be in a nice plight alone here, in the dark, with no means of getting assistance. I think I shall have ~~to~~ send you home to order some conveyance from the stables, for I don't believe I can walk. Let ~~me~~ me a hand, Mervyn, and let me see."

The result of the experiment was, that he could not stand with any comfort; and they held a long conversation as to what had better be done. It was settled that Mervyn should run to the stables, and give orders; and then go on, and tell his mother what had happened.

"I am afraid she will be anxious about us," said Lord Wardlaw, "as we are so far behind our time; so it will be better for you not to return here, but to go on at once to the house."

"I don't like leaving you alone," said Mervyn wistfully.

"Never fear, my dear boy. I shall do very well,"

He particularly wanted topring in to his mother in his present, and pouring out his concern what a confused account he would have happened; how long it would take Nina to unravel the truth from him and how much time they would have in the meantime.

Mervyn said nothing more, his step-father's bidding.

Consternation reigned in the and willing hands made hasty Lord Wardlaw's assistance.

Then the boy sped on. His as he entered the halls he had thought he should never enter the beloved presence he had never seek again. Remembering injunctions, he checked his passage, and quietly opened the door.

He had meant to speak so walk in leisurely; but when

can be got from the stables. And that is all I may tell you."

Lady Wardlaw changed colour as he spoke, but she looked more puzzled than alarmed.

"Tell me all about it, my darling," she said sitting down and drawing him to her; "do not hide anything from me. And Nina, come here too, and help me to understand."

Passing her arm round the slight form of the still trembling girl, whose dark eyes never moved from Mervyn's face, devouring him as one just risen from the grave, Magdalen laid her disengaged hand on the boy's, and waited for him to begin.

Mervyn's face was a study. Never in his life had he been so puzzled and dumbfounded. To refuse to comply with a request of his mother's was a thing altogether strange and impossible. On the other hand, to disobey his step-father was equally impossible. To break his promise—a promise made under such peculiar circumstances—was out of the question. He looked from his mother to Nina, and from Nina to his mother, with a scared face, and said nothing.

disobeyed me before. Do not break my heart now!"

"Mother, mother!" cried the boy, in despair; "don't, please don't! If you only knew all, you would say I was right."

"But *why* should I not know all," she demanded, "if, as you say, there *is* nothing?"

"Because I have promised," said Mervyn.

"Tell me one thing," she said, and her voice faltered; "why did you shout and cry as if in grief or terror when the gun went off?"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mervyn, stepping back in his astonishment, "how did you know anything about the gun? That is the very thing I was not to mention to you."

Magdalen was dismayed at the effect of her words.

"There is some dreadful mystery here," she said, rising and advancing to the bell; "and if you will not unravel it, I must find others who will."

She took the bell-rope in her hand, and was about to ring, when she was startled by a glad

Mervyn flew on the wings of love to execute his bidding, almost upsetting his mother in his eagerness to perform the office. She gave way, a little bewildered, but well pleased to see the boy's demeanour. She sat down on the sofa near, with her arm round Nina. The impetuous boy flung himself at her feet, and poured forth his tale.

They all listened with breathless interest, an interest that became quite painful when he painted in vivid language his hot pursuit through the woods, the terrible dénouement, and the harrowing details of his lonely vigil in the darkness. But when he went on to describe the three pictures that had risen around him, and the determination to which gazing on them had brought him, Magdalen held up her hand in mute entreaty, for it was more than she could bear. But Mervyn would not stop, would not spare himself or her, till he had made a full and free confession. And he went on to tell them all that he had felt, all that he had said, and all that he had done. But he had gone too far. When he got to the parting with his mother—when

lips, "please do not praise me. Uncle Charlie, if you only knew what I was before he came to Gran-ton, you would see how much I owe to him, and how grateful I ought to be."

She spoke in a tone of concentrated fervour surprised out of her usual reserve; and her beautiful eyes glowed and deepened as she raised the beseechingly to Mervyn's face.

"Hush!" said Magdalen, very softly; "hush! darlings. Love one another and be grateful to another, if you will; but give the praise on Him by whom you were thrown together."

The book is ended, and the story is told characters have acted before us, and the has fallen on them all. So we have do them; and returning each to our own life or only slightly remember, the parts t played.

Yet it may be, that in life's drama we the same parts as they; it may be we a in our paths, the lessons they learnt in t circumstances may be different, and o

unit, an atom; yet without it, it may be, the fabric would fall to pieces.

Looking upwards on a starlight evening, realise the units of the glittering sky? Stand by the sea, do we consider the atoms of the sand we tread? Yet every star in the heavens has its place to brighten; and every grain of sand on the shore has its place to fill.

Alike in Life and Nature, all seems confused. To us the sand seems ever shifting, the toy of every wave and every tide. To us the stars seem loosely scattered, sown at random on the firmament; sand and stars reigns over all creation the law of purposeless order.

So, to us, the infinite varieties of character in the world seem thrown together in infinite chaos—a seething mass of conflicting interests working out their own ends amid error and confusion. Yet all is pervaded by a Supreme Power, which we in our blindness do not see, all is in hopeless entanglement; the

ordered minds all things are out of course; to Him, all the parts, fitly joined together, are working up to the end He has ordained—to a perfect consummation. Silently is He ordering all things to the same end; mysteriously guiding our many feet, by the many thousand paths, to the same goal, blending our countless notes to the same glorious harmony; making, by His Almighty power, "all things work together for good."

THE END.

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